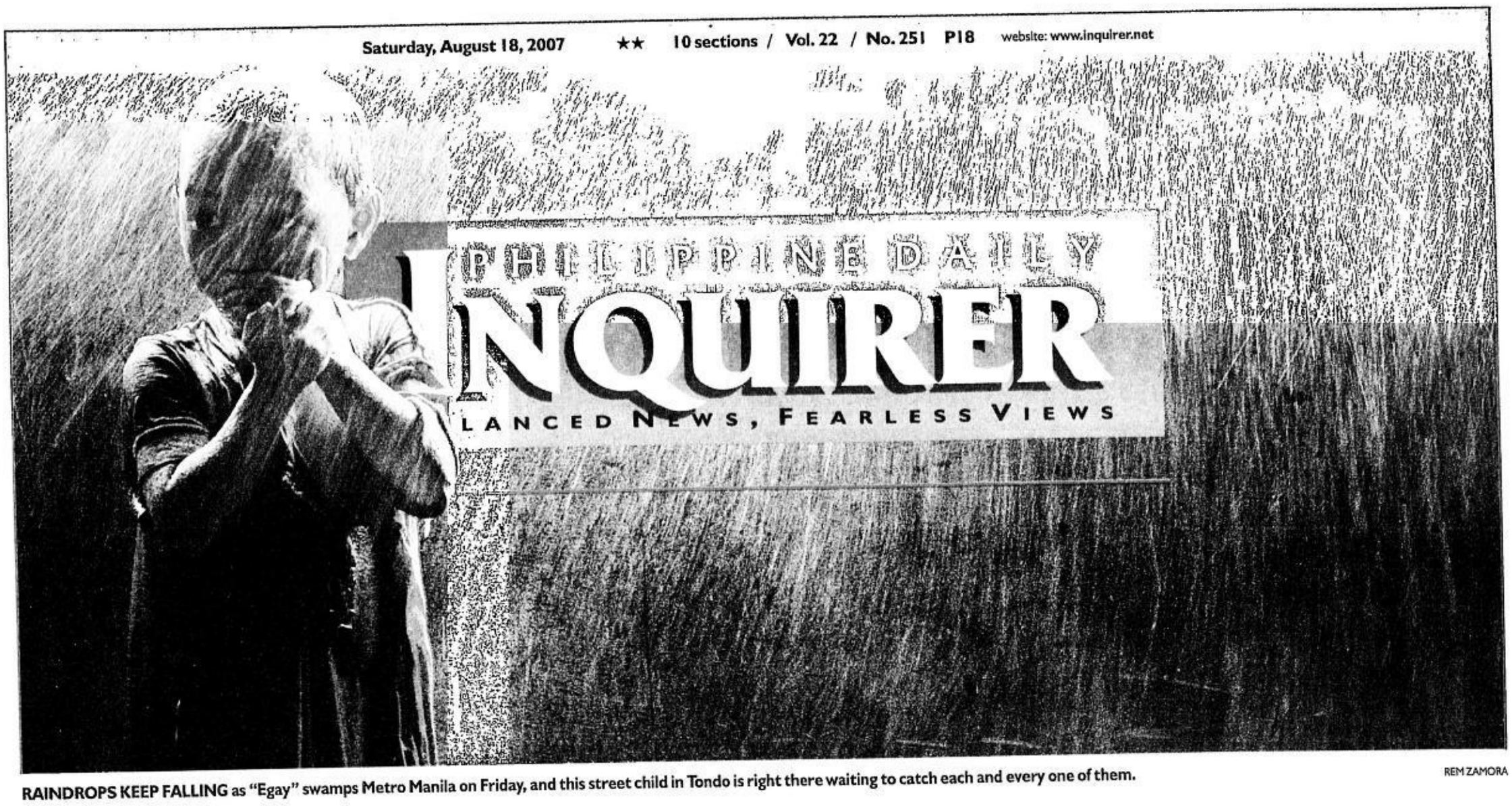
Saturday, August 18, 2007 ★★ 10 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 251 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS



RAINDROPS KEEP FALLING as "Egay" swamps Metro Manila on Friday, and this street child in Tondo is right there waiting to catch each and every one of them. REM ZAMORA

RP wins $425-M case

WB junks Fraport's Naia 3 claim

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE WORLD BANK HAS DISmissed the claim for compensation over the Naia Terminal 3 project of Germany's Frankfurt Airport Services Worldwide (Fraport), clearing the way for the eventual operation of the mothballed facility, officials said yesterday.

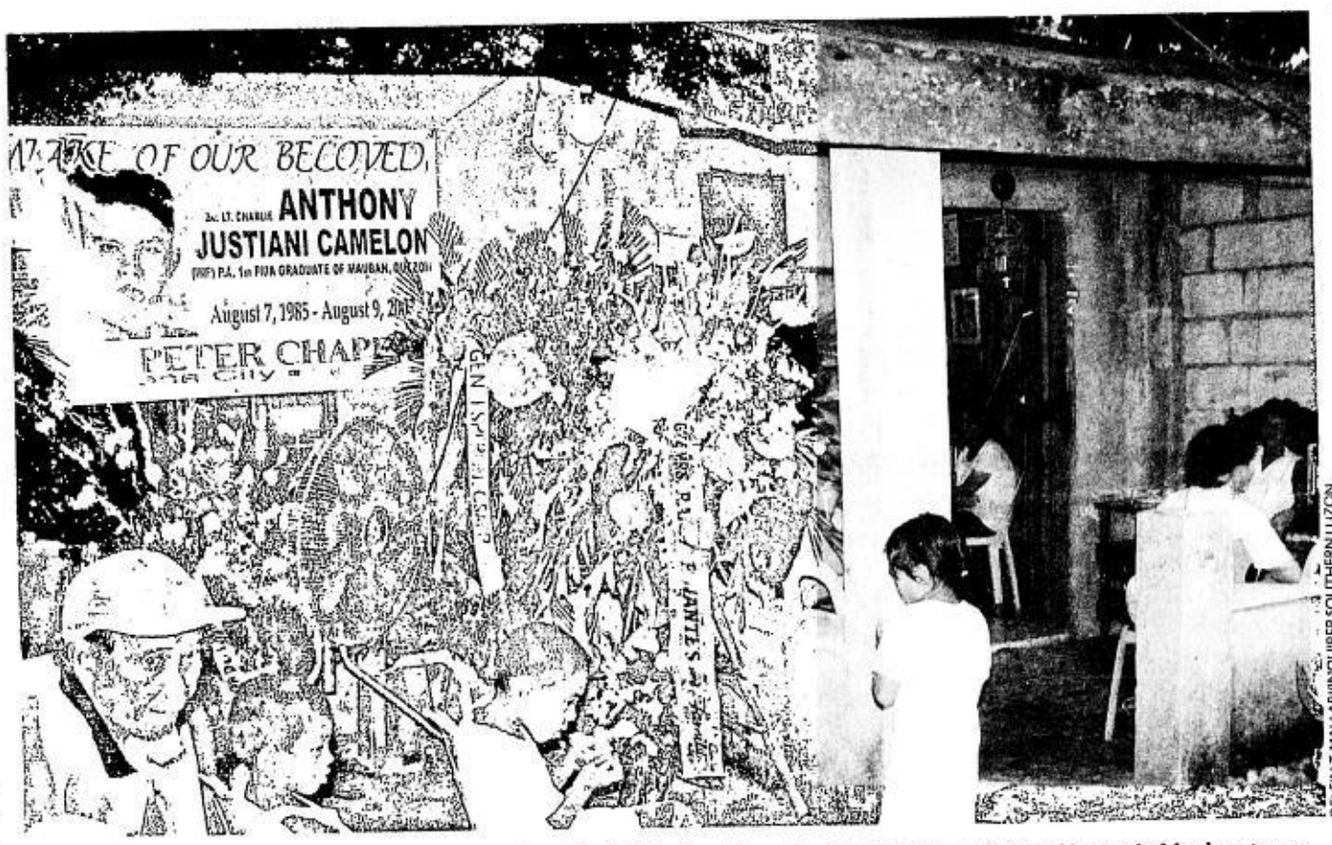
The bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) decided it lacked the jurisdiction to hear Fraport's claim brought against the Republic of the Philippines in 2003, an ecstatic Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera announced at a press briefing in Malacañang.

"Ladies and gentlemen, it's bad weather but good news," she said.

She quoted President Macapagal-Arroyo as saying, "Wow!" when told of the news.

"The Philippines has won in the international arbitration case filed by Fraport against our government. This is a significant milestone in our quest for modernity

RP WINS/ A7



DELFIN T. MALLARI/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

AN UNFINISHED LIFE: The vigil for 2nd Lt. Charlie Anthony Camelon is held in his unfinished house in Mauban town, Quezon. The only officer of 27 soldiers killed in Jolo, Camelon was only on his first assignment after his PMA graduation when killed in action. The town is proud of its first-ever PMAyer. The funeral is set on Monday with full military honors.

Biazon sees pattern in 2 Basilan debacles

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A SPAN OF SIX YEARS SEPARATES the debacles suffered by government troops in Al-Barka and Lamitan, both in Basilan, but they are linked in some way, according to Sen. Rodolfo Biazon.

A former chief of staff of the Armed Forces, Biazon made the connection between the ambush in Al-Barka (formerly Tipo-Tipo) on July 10, and the siege of Lamitan on June 2, 2001, after a meeting with Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV at the latter's detention cell in Fort Bonifacio yesterday morning.

Biazon later told reporters he was convinced that the Senate should investigate Trillanes' claim that a conspiracy among "ranking government officials" had led to the killing of 14

BIAZON/ A9

Investors now on risk-aversion stance, says BSP

THE PESO AND STOCK MARKET ARE likely to experience more volatility as investors reassess risk, Governor Amando Tetangco of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said yesterday.

"The impact (of the US credit crunch) really has been indirect, [it] has been in the form of risk aversion," Tetangco said.

But once global credit concerns ease, local markets should gain, given the country's sound macro-economic fundamentals, the central bank governor said.

"As markets reassess risk and as investors adjust their portfolios, economic prices can naturally be expected to change. That's why it's important

INVESTORS/ A6

'Alien' bangus invasion assailed

By Gabriel Cardinoza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—"ALIEN" bangus have invaded this city.

Bangus (milkfish) from other provinces have flooded public

ALIEN/ A5

39 planes seek shelter from 'Egay' in Clark, Subic

By [illegible] Burgonio, Tarra Quismundo and Inquirer Northern and Central Luzon

IN WHAT COULD BE THE LARGEST aircraft evacuations the country has seen, at least 39 passenger—18 of them cargo—planes from Taiwan and Hong Kong were being diverted to airports in Central Luzon yesterday to escape the onslaught of "Egay's" super strong winds of 215 kph.

Torrents of rain from a "massive cloudiness" induced by Supertyphoon Egay swamped a large part of Luzon yesterday and weathermen predicted more rains today in the north of the country, even as Egay began to weaken while heading toward Taiwan, officials said.

Toward evening, as early darkness fell on Metro Manila, Egay had lost some of its power.

From 215 kph, Egay's maximum sustained winds slightly tapered off to 205 kph, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

It predicted more rains today in different parts of Luzon, especially up north.

Moderate to heavy rains will contin-

39 PLANES/ A6

MAGSAYSAY AWARDS

Blind Chinese leads way in fight for rights of poor

By E.K. Santos
Contributor

AS A CHILD, CHEN GUANGCHENG listened intently to his father's stories of classic heroes. One can only surmise how images of heroic men and women who challenged the powers of the high and mighty in search of justice for the poor and oppressed must have filled the mind and consumed the spirit of the young Chen, blind since infancy after a bout with high fever.

Today, Chen Guangcheng is the 2007 Ramon Magsaysay Awardee for Emergent Leadership, for "his irrepressible passion for justice in leading ordinary Chinese citizens

BLIND CHINESE/ A10

CHEN GUANGCHENG: Awardee for Emergent Leadership can't attend Aug. 31 rites; is in jail for speaking for the voiceless.

Puno says SC to use writ of 'amparo'

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THROUGH THE WRIT OF "AMPARO," the military will not be able to evade culpability for extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances by merely denying that it is holding in custody missing or disappeared persons, Chief Justice Reynato Puno Jr. said yesterday.

"It will not be enough for state authorities or agents to deny that they have custody of the victims. This is the usual defense they forward whenever [families of] victims file a petition for writ of habeas corpus. In a lot of in-

PUNO/ A5

WHAT'S INSIDE

METRO/ A21
Bigamy charges filed vs Noli de Castro, wife Arlene

SATURDAY SPECIAL / F1
Fil-Am actresses should vie for role of Steve McQueen's Manila-born wife

OPINION/ A13
News behind the news in 'Between Deadlines'

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

SATURDAY, AUGUST 18, 2007

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Mid-Day SUERTRES Evening

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(All in exact order)

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Western section of Luzon will have monsoon rains while the rest of Luzon and Western Visayas will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Gusty Winds	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Gusty Winds	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Gusty Winds	Tacloban	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Rains	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Rains	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Occasional Rains	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/08/17/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Mini-Marshall Plan for M'danao eyed

By Christian V. Esguerra and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SPEAKER JOSE DE Venecia yesterday floated a new approach that could end the raging conflict in parts of Mindanao.

DE VENECIA

HONASAN

He proposed a five-year mini-Marshall Plan to mobilize P46-billion for Muslim Mindanao as an economic action program.

De Venecia said his plan would build infrastructure, schools, hospitals, farm-to-market roads and would be "so electrifying and effective" it would lure rebels away from the insurgencies of both the communists and Muslims that have plagued Mindanao for years.

At the same time, he suggested a shift in military action from an all-out war against insurgents to "focused surgical operations" targeting only the Abu Sayyaf group.

"This action will put an end to the insurgency," De Venecia told the INQUIRER. "This is something that we have to be very serious about."

The twin proposals of a monetary package and a selective military action would be among the talking points in the resumption of peace talks between the government and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front in Malaysia next week, he said.

"We will support these peace talks with a genuine economic action package," De Venecia added.

Under the proposal, the Mindanao aid will be spread for five years. Half of the budget will be raised from donations from the United States, European Union, Scandinavian counties, Australia, Japan and neighboring countries in Southeast Asia.

The rest of the fund will be appropriated from the annual national budget.

De Venecia proposed the multibillion-peso package for Mindanao in the context of an "all encompassing" amnesty program against so-called enemies of the Philippine government.

Sen. Gringo Honasan said yesterday the "band-aid" solutions the government had resorted to in injecting economic activity in Mindanao proved to be ineffective in lifting its people out of poverty.

"Piece-meal and half-baked approaches are simply no longer applicable there. Mindanao does not need a few billion pesos here and there over several years. It needs several billions of pesos in development funds in quick order," said Honasan, who has also been pushing for a Marshall Plan-type Mindanao recovery and reconstruction fund.

He said Filipinos in Mindanao were entitled to their share of access to good-paying jobs, productive lands, decent housing as well as adequate education and health care as much as the Filipinos in Luzon and Visayas.

"The crisis there cannot be resolved by simply overrunning insurgents in the battlefield," said the former Army colonel in the wake of the government's plan to step up military operations in the area following the deadly ambush of Marines in Basilan.

Meanwhile, the Ecumenical Voice for Peace and Human Rights, a multi-religious organization, yesterday joined the call for the Arroyo administration to withdraw its plan for an all-out war in Basilan and Sulu.

The network of church leaders, human rights defenders and civil libertarians said the two provinces had suffered enough.

With a report from Jerome Aning

I can do a better job – Mar Roxas

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

HE CONTINUED TO BE COY about his presidential ambitions, but Sen. Mar Roxas yesterday declared he believed that he could do "a better job" and bring the country to a "better place" than the current occupant in Malacañang.

"Do I want change for our country? The answer is yes. Do I think I can do a better job? The answer is yes. Do I think that our country could be in a much better place? The answer is yes," Roxas gushed in an hour-long interview with ANC.

Despite being touted as a strong contender for the presidency in 2010 along with Senate President Manuel Villar and Senators Panfilo Lacson and Loren Legarda, Roxas insisted that Malacañang was far afield from his current preoccupation.

"2010 is two and a half years away, who knows what's going to happen? Who knows what 2010 will bring? I am a senator now, I have a duty," Roxas said.

Roxas in fact had been introduced by former Sen. Jovito Salonga, a fellow Liberal Party member, in various public appearances as the "next President of the Philippines."

Roxas said that while he was with the minority bloc, he was wary of being "pigeonholed" as an opposition.

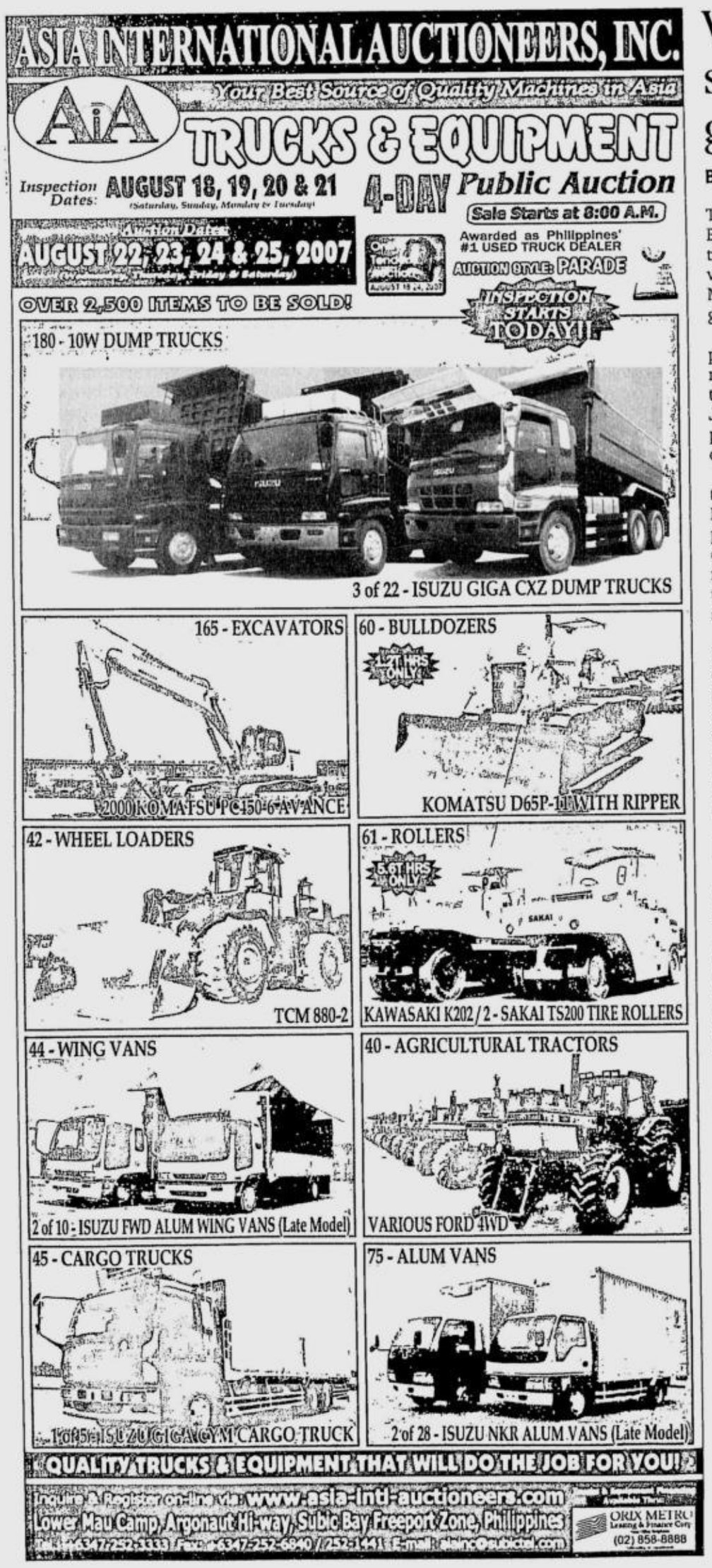
"It's not simply one-dimensional, that being in the opposition means just saying 'No' to everything. I certainly am for many things and I am for moving our country forward," he said. "This whole dynamic of opposition-administration is really quite tiresome. I refuse to be pigeonholed.

"I am Mar Roxas, these are my beliefs, this is where I'm going to take the country."

Roxas, a former Wall Street investment banker, was not too shy in baring his solutions to the ills bedeviling the Arroyo administration, like fiscal woes and poverty.

Roxas said one did not have to be a rocket scientist to solve the persistent budget deficit problem that had hounded the country since the Ramos administration.

"A housewife balancing her budget, except for the number of zeroes, is the same as a President or a budget secretary balancing the national budget. You have to prioritize, you have to make sure there are no leakages. Make sure that every peso that you spend is effective and efficient and not wasted. It's the same principle," he said.



War in South setting back dev't goals, says expert

By TJ Burgonio

THE ARMED CONFLICT IN SULU AND Basilan is further setting back the eradication of poverty and other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Region 12 in Mindanao, according to a civil society group.

"Even if the hostilities are taking place in pockets of communities, whatever achievements that have been gained for the past three years would be greatly affected," Joseph Gloria of the Social Watch Philippines-Mindanao told reporters on Thursday. "These would be set back."

Speaking at the National Consultation on the Philippine Midterm Report on the MDGs, convened by Social Watch Philippines, in Quezon City, Gloria said internal conflict, together with the El Niño phenomenon, had been compromising the attainment of the MDGs in Region 12 (Socksargen) for the past several years.

"The region has been long affected by hostilities. The encounters between government troops and either communist insurgents or Moro separatists affect the lives and livelihood of the population," he said, adding: "In hostilities, the most affected are the children. If war erupts, where do the people run? They run to the nearest school, where they reside for a few weeks. That affects the education of the children."

By 2015

The Philippines signed in 2000 the Millennium Declaration and the covenant to attain the eight MDGs by 2015.

The goals are to eradicate poverty and hunger, achieve universal primary education, promote gender equality, reduce child mortality, improve maternal health, combat HIV-AIDS, malaria and other diseases, ensure environmental sustainability, and develop global partnership for development.

Apart from having to cope with loss of lives in the aftermath of the hostilities, families "find it difficult to revert to normal and productive lives," Gloria said in his presentation.

He said that in Region 12, there had been a "downward trend" in children's participation in primary education from school year 2002-2003 to school year 2003-2004.

"Education and basic services are the true indicators of poverty," Gloria said. "You have a downward trend... Will they make it by 2015? I doubt it."

To achieve the MDGs, the downward education trend should be reversed, the armed conflict should be addressed, and preparations for El Niño should be made, he said.

Prof. Leonor Briones, lead convenor of Social Watch Philippines, noted a "clear correlation" between conflict-ridden and poverty-stricken areas.

She said the regions lagging behind in the attainment of MDGs were marked by high levels of poverty and of instability, and poor levels of education and of health.

32 in PIPC scam charged with estafa

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INvestigation (NBI) yesterday filed syndicated estafa (fraud) charges against 32 officers, incorporators and employees of the Performance Investment Products Corp. (PIPC) and PIPC Corp.

Charged with syndicated estafa before the Department of Justice were Michael H.K. Liew, the Singaporean owner of PIPC and chair of the board and president of PIPC Corp.; his business partner Chua Pwey Chan, alias Albert Chua; Cristina Gonzales-Tuason, PIPC Corp. general manager and treasurer; and Ma. Cristina Jurado and Manuel Gonzales, PIPC Corp. corporate secretaries.

Also charged were Ernesto Sy, Gabriel Dee, Mario Lorenzo, Jonas-Karl Perez and Peter Donnely Barot, PIPC Corp incorporators.

The NBI also charged with the same offense at least 22 employees or marketing agents who allegedly enticed investors to put in their money in the firm.

The case stemmed from the complaints filed by at least 21 investors who put in a total of $1.5 million, or P75 million.

NBI investigators said that from year 2001 to July 2007, the complainants were duped into investing with the PIPC on foreign exchange trading.

The complainants told NBI that they each put in a required minimum investment of $40,000.

They claimed that their investments were traded by PIPC into multiple contracts and were told that their money would be "100-percent guaranteed" and protected from any loss for a trading cycle of eight weeks.

PIPC offered 1 to 2 percent monthly earnings on their investments and that 60 percent of the earnings net of trading commissions and management fees would be credited to their respective bank accounts within 14 working days, the complainants said.

They added that they were required to wire their investment through any of the three foreign banks where PIPC maintained its account, namely Standard Chartered Bank-Hong Kong, ABN Amro (Hong Kong and Japan) and Chase Manhattan-New York.

PIPC is the foreign exchange trading firm whose Singaporean owner allegedly disappeared with at least $250 million in investors' money.

PIPC Corp, on the other hand, was registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) as a financial research and information technology firm.

However, the NBI believes that the two companies are one and the same.

Lawyer Ruel Lasala, NBI regional director and chief of the National Capital Region, said, "It appears that the respondents only used PIPC as a front. Maybe it was really their plan to use a non-existing firm (PIPC) to lure investors, thinking that it would be easy for them to elude charges by claiming that they were connected to a different company (PIPC Corp)."

PIPC, he said, was not registered with SEC.

The respondents in the investment scam were the same persons comprising the set of directors, officers and employees of PIPC Corp. engaged in soliciting capital investments from investors for PIPC, Lasala added.

Citing a verification made with SEC, Lasala added that PIPC and PIPC Corp. (formerly Caravaggio Holdings Inc.) held office at the same business address at the 15th and 31st floors of the Citibank Tower, No. 8741, Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.

Fast-food chains bag 'Pasaway sa Lawa' awards

By DJ Yap

WHAT COULD "BOY BAWANG" have in common with "Chickenjoy" and "Big Mac"?

Not much, except the makers of these popular snacks now share top billing among the 26 worst polluters of the Laguna de Bay last year, according to a program monitoring the environmental record of companies operating near the waterways leading to the lake.

The establishments were given the "Pasaway sa Lawa" Award (or, the award for recalcitrants on the lake) by the Laguna Lake Development Authority in ceremonies yesterday in Makati, which also recognized the most earth-friendly of the firms that were evaluated.

KSK Food Products, manufacturer of the popular corn snack, Boy Bawang, joined ubiquitous food chains Jollibee, McDonald's, KFC, Chowking and Max's Restaurant in the roster of top Laguna de Bay polluters.

Boycott call

"Unless these companies change their ways, the public should just boycott them," said Raquel Naciongayo, who heads the monitoring group for the Laguna de Bay area.

Now on its second year, the LLDA's shame campaign seeks to publicize the worst environment violators that dump untreated wastewater into the lake in hopes of pressuring them into action.

Jollibee had four of its branches—Pasig-Simbahan, Market Ave.-Pasig, San Andres-Malate and Siniloan—on the shame list, while arch rival McDonald's made the dishonor roll because of its Fairview branch.

Chowking was named for violations committed by two of its branches, San Andres-Del Pilar-Malate and East Ave.-Diliman.

The Acropolis-Libis branch of KFC and the Quezon Ave. branch of Max's Restaurant gave their companies the dubious distinction, as did Gerry's Grill-Libis.

Naciongayo explained that although the food chains are not located near the lake, they dump untreated wastewater that goes into the creeks emptying into the Pasig River and eventually to Laguna de Bay.

Also named in the list of dishonorables were Robina Farms 11, Metrowalk Commercial Complex, Novaliches Plaza Mall, Conan Enterprises, The New Albergus, CFF Farm, The Wave-Federal Brent Oil Corp., Wynsum Corporate Plaza;

Bimta Slaughterhouse, Vega Center-Mayang Industrial Development Corp., Aclem Paper Mills, Palmdale Heights, Hansson Paper Phils., RFFN Steam Laundry, and Olivarez Plaza-Los Banos.

No representative from the erring companies appeared at yesterday's event to accept the Pasaway Award.

Dolora Nepomuceno, the LLDA officer-in-charge, said the agency came up with the shame list after a year-long monitoring and surveillance process, technical conferences and deliberations.

The performances of the companies were rated according to a color-coded system of evaluation.

Rated "black" were the *pasaway*, or those which were found to have completely bypassed the wastewater treatment process and channeled untreated wastes directly into the bay.

Rated "green" were companies that showed levels of less than 40 mg per liter of BOD, have no pending legal cases, and feature easily identifiable discharge points for treated wastewater.

In between were ratings of "blue" and "red," with blue just a step behind green, and red two steps behind. Up to 600 companies were evaluated this year, with plans of expanding the coverage to 2,000 next year, Naciongayo said.

At yesterday's ceremonies, three companies that won green ratings were honored: AB Foods & Beverage Phils. of Pasig, Laws Textile Phils. and Universal Robina Corp.-Choco in Pasig.

This time, the awards were for real and the companies cited sent representatives to accept their plaques.

AB Foods Supervisor Danilo Ferrer, who spoke on behalf of the green awardees, said he always tells his employees to comply with environment laws even when the companies around them do not.

"Our great performance only became possible because my policy is, let's not look at what other industries are doing. Let's just make it a point to follow the law and help protect the environment," he said.

Forty-seven establishments were also honored for achieving a blue rating, including Banawe Soybean Curd Food Products Corp., which was recognized for having shown the most improvement, bouncing back from a black rating the year before.

GREEN MARCH
Students, media men, soldiers, policemen and civilian employees of different government agencies crowd a narrow trail as they trek to the Mayon Volcano Natural Park in Sto. Domingo, Albay, for yesterday's launching of the Trees for Life project in the Bicol region. More than 2.6 million seedlings were expected to be planted this month in Bicol alone. NINO JESUS ORBETA, INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

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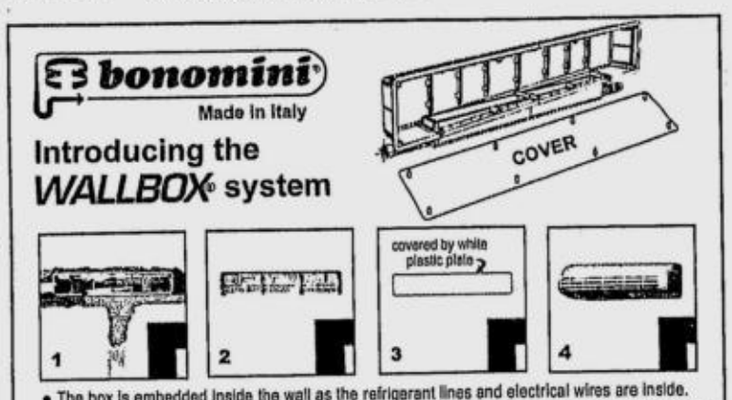

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MMDA gets more funds for flood control

By Michael Lim Ubac

WITH MORE FLASHFLOODS COME HIGHER budget.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday ordered Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya to increase the proposed allocation for flood control, which is tucked under the budget of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA).

Ms Arroyo has increased the agency's flood control budget from P151 million this year to P256 million next year, Andaya said.

The increase will be reflected on the proposed 2008 national budget set to be filed by Malacañang to the House of Representatives on Aug. 22.

Andaya said the budget would be used to improve the drainage system in the flood-prone areas of the metropolis.

"It is not for declogging," he clarified. "The budget will go to drainage construction and improvement."

Andaya said the supervisory authority of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)-National Capital Region for flood control was now with the MMDA.

Correction

IN THE Aug. 17 issue, a front page story—"Smuggled luxury cars smashed"—identified erroneously some of the smuggled luxury vehicles destroyed by the government. The 18 vehicles destroyed are as follows: Lincoln Navigator (1), BMW X5 (3), Mitsubishi GTO (1), Chevrolet Starcraft (1), Toyota Lucida (1), BMW 735i (1), Toyota Emina (4), Hyundai Grandeur (2), Toyota Estima (1), Nissan Serena (1), Mitsubishi Pajero Junior (1) and Mitsubishi Cardina (1).

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Saturday, August 18, 2007
19th Week in Ordinary Time
Jane Frances de Chantal

1st Reading: Jos 24:14-29
Gospel: Matthew 19:13-15

Little children were brought to Jesus that he might lay his hands on them with a prayer. But the disciples scolded those who brought them. Jesus then said, "Let them be! Do not stop the children from coming to me, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to people such as these." So Jesus laid his hands on them and went his way.

Commentary

Decide today who you will serve! Get rid of your other idols if you decide that you will serve God alone. And the people vow to obey God, knowing that God is holy and will not forgive if they do evil and worship other gods. They raise a stone to witness their covenant renewed once again with God, recording in the book of the law what is expected of the people. Joshua has ushered them into the land and set them each to their own heritage/portion. And he dies. The transition from slavery to freedom is completed—now their life in the land of Israel begins.

Jesus blesses the children that are brought to him and rebukes his disciples for trying to hinder them from coming to him. We must be as children—with no power, no arrogance, no place in society, having to obey everyone, treated primarily as slaves, servants (at the time of Jesus). Children stand for those who are weak, need help from others, cannot make it on their own and are treated as cheap available labor. Not just children but all those under the age of 15. We must do religiously—this is our law from the Lord—what they are caught in by age, circumstance, and others' power. Are we the children of God?

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Miriam wants mayors sacked for Metro floods

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO wants the Ombudsman to suspend or kick out city mayors who fail to clean up their area's clogged drainage systems, the main culprit in the flooding of the metropolis during every heavy downpour.

"Despite their mandate under the law to provide efficient and effective programs and mechanisms for solid waste disposal, sewerage system, and flood control, it appears that no visible and effective efforts have been taken by the mayors to solve the problem of flooding in Metro Manila," said Santiago in a statement yesterday.

Santiago said she would file a resolution on Tuesday to investigate the liability of public officials.

"The liable officials will be referred to the Ombudsman for criminal prosecution and possible suspension and eventual removal from public office. Under the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act, a public officer that causes any undue injury to any party through gross inexcusable negligence is guilty of corruption," she said.

Citing the 1989 Supreme Court decision in Alejandro versus the People, Santiago said: "Gross inexcusable negligence was defined as negligence characterized by the want of even slight care, acting or omitting to act in a situation where there is a duty to act, not inadvertently but willfully and intentionally with a conscious indifference to consequences in so far as other persons may be affected."

Santiago noted that the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) has identified garbage clogging of drainage systems as the main reason for the widespread flooding in Metro Manila.

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Puno says SC to use writ of 'amparo'

From page A1

stances, they are able to get away with it," Puno said.

He said the writ of amparo (the Spanish word for "protection"), which the Supreme Court has been working on, would strip the military of such a defense.

'Habeas data'

Under the writ, families of victims will also be given the right to access information pertaining to their cases—a constitutional right called the "habeas data" common in several countries in Latin America.

"If you have this right, it will be very difficult for the state agents and authorities to be able to escape their culpability ... That is more or less the general sense of the writ," Puno said.

The members of the tribunal met for the third time yesterday for the writ's draft, according to the Chief Justice. The final version, which is planned to be made retroactive, will be released next month.

"That will be subject to the approval of the members of the court, but there is no legal impediment to make this rule retroactive," Puno said.

No more usual claims

The Chief Justice spoke with reporters on the sidelines of the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption's 9th founding anniversary celebration at Camp Crame in Quezon City.

Giving a brief overview of the writ's framework, Puno said it was the new remedy that the high court was drawing up in order to address the spate of extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances.

He said it would prohibit the military from coming up with its usual claims and accord victims and aggrieved parties better witness protection and temporary protection orders.

Should it be made retroactive, the writ will be applied to the case of missing activist Jonas Burgos, who was abducted supposedly by the military in a Quezon City mall on April 28.

Jonas Burgos' case

Late last month, the Supreme Court issued a writ of habeas corpus in response to a petition filed by Jonas' mother Edita Burgos, and ordered Armed Forces Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. and other respondents to present Jonas before the Court of Appeals.

But the AFP officials showed up without Jonas, reiterating to the appellate court that he was not in their custody and that they were not aware of his whereabouts.

"[They cannot simply deny]; that will be prohibited," Puno said. "We will be setting up a standard for them to follow, and if they cannot satisfy the standard, the proper relief can be granted by the court."

'Alien' bangus ...

From page A1

markets here affecting local producers and wholesalers who are trying to stop its distribution.

City agriculturist Emma Molina said the biggest shipment, so far, was last week at the height of torrential rains, when at least two tons of bangus harvested from Laguna and other provinces were delivered here.

Julita Perez, president of the Malimgas-Aliguas Dagupan Vendors Federation, said the "alien" bangus started arriving here last June.

"They came by jeeploads—at least six a day—in the last three months," Perez said.

Cheaper by P20

She said the alien bangus were being sold P15 to P20 cheaper than the local bangus.

What hurt local fish growers most, Perez said, was that these alien bangus were being passed off by vendors as "genuine" Dagupan bangus.

Bangus growers and vendors here said the bangus variety farmed in Dagupan's fishponds and cages is the tastiest in the world.

"The reputation of Dagupan's top product would be ruined if we do not do something about this," Perez said.

To the untrained eye, an alien bangus looks exactly like a Dagupan bangus. To tell the difference, one has to smell the gills.

"An alien bangus has that distinctive, unpleasant, mud-like odor," Perez said.

But some vendors have become creative, Perez said, by applying *tawas* (alum) on the bangus to eliminate the odor.

"We have worked very hard in marketing our bangus as the best in the world and we should not allow these 'aliens' to destroy [it] just like that," Perez said.

The annual Bangus Festival, which began in 2001, was a marketing strategy that involved local bangus producers.

Perez said her group had asked the city government to ban the entry of bangus harvested in other provinces.

However, Molina, the city agriculturist, said it would be illegal for the local government to impose a ban against bangus produced in other areas.

"We cannot do that. This is a free market," she said.

No health risks

Molina added that the entry of other bangus varieties in the market depends on the *consignaciones* (wholesalers) themselves.

"They should get their act together and agree on how to deal with alien bangus," she said.

Former Binmaley Councilor Arnulfo Alipio, a bangus wholesaler, said there is no law stopping the sale of bangus coming from Laguna and other provinces.

"They don't pose health risks to the people. It's just the taste [that is different]," Alipio said.

He said it is the buyer's responsibility to find out whether what he or she is buying is an "inferior" bangus.

"A buyer should know what he or she is buying. They can even ask around if they are not sure about the [origin of the] product," Alipio said.

He said he could not refuse bangus from other provinces that are taken to his stall at the Magsaysay fish market here because "this is business."

"They are questioning us because we are making [more] money than them, because our products move faster. But they are supposed to have better quality products, so they should be able to market them," Alipio said. "We are just giving people, who do not have much money, a choice."

Perez said her group would soon be posting signs in public markets here to warn consumers about the proliferation of alien bangus.

Package like chickens

But Molina said more than the warning signs, local producers should develop a branding process for their product.

"We also have to be creative," Molina said.

She said she met with bangus wholesalers here and they have agreed to draw up a process to protect the Dagupan bangus.

For instance, she said, they could package bangus the way dressed chickens are sold in supermarkets.

"This way, we will be able to easily determine who among the wholesalers are dealing with a specific [variety of] bangus," Molina said.

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Heavy rains fill up Luzon dams

By TJ Burgonio and Tarra Quismundo

AFTER MORE THAN A WEEK OF monsoon rains, most of the seven major dams in Luzon are close to reaching a stable level, the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said yesterday.

Angat Dam showed the most significant recovery, rising by over 14 meters from a low of 170.68 m on Aug. 6 to a high of 185.2 m yesterday, thanks to the rain induced by two storms and supertyphoon "Egay".

At 185.20 m above sea level, the Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan, is 5.2 meters above the critical level of 180 m, and a mere 5.04 m off the rule curve.

The rule curve is the elevation of water at which a dam could normally supply water for power generation, domestic use and irrigation.

"It's expected to further rise with the rains brought by 'Egay'," said Susan Espinueva, chief of operations of Pagasa's flood forecasting division.

The reservoir supplies water to 12 million residents in Metro Manila and farmers tending at least 18,000 hectares of farmland in Central Luzon.

Binga and Ambuklao dams in Benguet, on the other hand, have stabilized.

As of 6 a.m. yesterday, the water elevation in Binga was 749.97 m or 12.10 m above the rule curve. In Ambuklao, it was 573.15, or 10.57 m above the rule curve.

The water level in San Roque dam in Pangasinan was pegged at 245.01 m as of 6 a.m. yesterday.

The supply of water in this reservoir should not be a problem because it sources its water from Binga and Ambuklao dams, according to the hydro meteorologists.

But what remained a source of concern are the Magat Dam in Isabela, whose level at 162.33 was still 18.45 m off the rule curve, and Pantabangan Dam in Nueva Ecija, whose level at 192.51 m was 10.15 m off the rule curve.

"The only concern now of hydro meteorologists are Magat and Pantabangan dams," Pagasa weather forecaster Robert Rivera said.

"There are clouds over Magat, but these are thin and not rain-bearing clouds," Espinueva said. "It will be receiving rain, but not as intense and heavy as the rainfall that Angat will get."

The Philippine Air Force 900th Weather Group is on standby to pursue its cloud-seeding mission and fill the thirsty Magat, the region's main water source.

Lt. Col. Eladio Matas, a senior weather officer and expert rainmaker, told the Inquirer the cloud-seeding team may well be redeployed in Isabela.

"According to our weather officers there, there are only drizzles and winds in Cagayan ... That's why it's really necessary to continue cloud-seeding there," Matas said.

"It's really hard to find seedable clouds there... We had two sorties where we saw seedable clouds and when we got there, they had already dissipated. The weather is really weird up there," said 1st Lt. Ramil Daet of the 220th Airlift Wing.

LUCKY 7, IT IS NOT: A trader flashes a thumbs down as he talks to a client during the trading day on Friday at the Philippine Stock Exchange in Makati City. AP

39 planes seek shelter from 'Egay' in Clark, Subic

From page A1

ue to fall over the western section of Luzon, including Metro Manila, and extreme northern Luzon, Pagasa senior weather specialist Robert Sawi said.

"As it exits the country, it will further enhance the monsoon rain. So in Manila, we will continue to experience the same moderate to heavy rainfall," he said in a phone interview.

But by Sunday, "the weather disturbance should dissipate," supervising forecaster Rene Molina told reporters.

At 4 p.m. yesterday, Egay was spotted 150 km northeast of Basco, Batanes, the closest it got to a Philippine land mass, according to Sawi.

SWAMPED: This picture shows why it makes a lot of sense for schools to remain shut on Friday and for government to suspend work in public offices. REUTERS

Humanitarian considerations

Raymundo Guevarra, head of the Subic Bay International Airport operations center, said at least 37 aircraft—18 of them of courier giant Federal Express (FedEx) from Hong Kong—were seeking shelter at Subic as Egay (internationally called Sepat) tore into Taiwan.

A Clark airport official said two passenger aircraft from Uni Airways of Taiwan would stay at the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Clark.

"They will be here just to escape the storm, which is expected to batter Taiwan, as well as affect the Hong Kong terminal," Guevarra said.

He said Subic airport could accommodate as many as 41 planes at a time.

"We have an Icao (International Civil Aviation Organization) agreement that we help each other out in case of emergencies. In case of evacuation, there is a standing agreement that we accommodate evacuation," said Air Transportation Office chief Nilo Jatico.

"That's part of humanitarian considerations. That's done all over the world," he added.

The Philippines last accommodated shelter-seeking planes four years ago when 16 aircraft from Taipei flew to the country to avoid a storm on the island, said Jatico.

Jatico said the empty aircraft might stay in the country to park here for "at most two days," or until the weather cleared.

Still no classes

Authorities suspended classes at all levels yesterday in Metro Manila, Rizal, Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Mindoro, Zambales, Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga and Tarlac.

Employees in government offices were sent home early.

The National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) said there would still be no classes today at all levels in the National Capital Region as well as in Tarlac, Pampanga and Bulacan.

'High load'

Persistent rains and whipping winds grounded some domestic flights and delayed several others.

After all the nightmare it had brought upon street traffic and after disruptions in class and work schedules, Egay had sent only a few dozen families to evacuation centers in Metro Manila and neighboring Rizal province, based on figures from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Though the figure may still rise overnight, the relatively low numbers had Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral agreeing that this year's calamities have posed a "rarely light load" for her agency in terms of relief operations, compared to last year.

Since Wednesday, the DSWD has aided 30 families forced to leave their homes in Mandaluyong City. Eight families in different parts of Rizal were also evacuated.

Chest-high floodwaters struck several towns in Pampanga.

More than 1,000 people were evacuated from flooded villages in Pampanga, where 70 houses were damaged, the Associated Press said. Twenty towns in Pampanga were under floodwater, affecting 372,000 residents, the NDCC said.

A boat bound for northern Calayan island was stranded in the coastal town of Aparri with its 70 passengers, the NDCC added.

Rodolfo Santos, head of the provincial disaster coordinating council in Bulacan, said rescue teams had not received reports of severe flooding in any town in Bulacan as of Friday morning.

Despite the rains, farmers in Isabela started harvesting their corn plants wilted by a dry spell early this month so these could be fed to carabaos.

Gumersindo Lasam, regional director of the Department of Agriculture, said the region's agriculture sector lost at least P700 million from the drought, with Isabela registering P450 million worth of losses in corn production.

In Cagayan, farmers said light but continuous rains brought relief to their parched farms but these came too late and could not save crops damaged by the drought.

Rains were steady in Baguio City but major roads leading to the summer capital were open, civil defense officials said.

Cordillera civil defense officer Imelda Acosta said rains from tropical storms "Chedeng" and "Dodong" last week and from Egay helped replenish the dams of two hydroelectric power facilities in Benguet, prompting the National Power Corp. to open the outtake valves of Ambuklao and Binga dams by a meter.

Acosta said this was a standard precaution because dam waters had not reached their maximum levels. *(See related story on Page A1.)*

Expect rain till today

"Until Saturday, we should expect wet conditions," said Nathaniel Servando, Pagasa deputy director for research and development.

Pagasa alerted residents in areas covered by storm signals against big waves and storm surges, and those living in low-lying areas against flash floods and landslides.

Egay's gusts forced Asian Spirit to forego trips to Baguio, Palawan and Mindoro. The same carrier's flights to Surigao and Calbayog were briefly delayed.

Cebu Pacific Air's trips to Davao, Cebu and Iloilo yesterday morning suffered delays of up to 30 minutes. South East Asian Airlines also reported brief delays.

Outbound flights using the Ninoy Aquino International Airport's Terminal 1 and Philippine Airlines flights departing from the Naia Centennial Terminal took off without hitches, airport officials said.

But some incoming PAL flights suffered problems. An airline spokesperson said a Narita-Manila flight was canceled "due to aircraft situation." *With reports from Volt Contreras and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila; Villamor Visaya Jr., Estanislao Caldez, Vincent Cabreza and Gabriel Cardinoza, Inquirer Northern Luzon, and Ansbert Joaquin, Jun Malig, and Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon, AP and Reuters*

Investors now on risk-aversion stance, says BSP chief

From page A1

that this process is done in an orderly fashion so there's no disruption," Tetangco told reporters.

"Once the external factors settle down and markets once again refocus on fundamentals, we should see a positive effect on our own markets, given that the Philippines continues to have sound macroeconomic fundamentals," he said.

The peso hit a three-month low of 46.90 per dollar yesterday, with the currency's losses in the last four weeks at nearly 5 percent. Traders said the central bank had intervened in the market yesterday to support the peso.

The local stock market has fallen more than 10 percent in three days to Friday, erasing its gains this year.

Regional currency and equities markets have taken a beating, as investors dumped risky emerging market assets following fears of a global credit crisis.

Tetangco said that Philippine banks had limited exposure to collateralized debt obligations (CDOs), at about 0.2 percent of the industry's total assets, with investments mainly in assets which were A-rated or higher.

Shares closed yesterday at this year's new low, with lingering concerns that US shares may fall further and Tokyo's plunge eroding early gains.

The 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index shed another 55.97 points, or 2 percent, to finish at 2,884.34, its lowest level since Dec. 27. Last Thursday, the market fell 6 percent, wiping out all gains so far this year.

This week's index is off 12 percent from the end of last week.

Exaggerated

"Definitely, this selling is exaggerated," said Ricardo Puig, analyst at Wealth Securities. "But who can argue with market sentiment?"

He said the underlying fundamentals are calling for a more rational view on stocks.

"The fear caused by this risk aversion is still there. Any uptrend is used as opportunity [by investors] to sell," said Ron Rodrigo, research head at Unicapital Securities.

Global stocks have been streaking down since Aug. 9, when worries about US subprime loans and their broader financial impact overwhelmed markets in Asia, Europe and the United States.

The US subprime sector supplies home loans to people with poor credit histories.

Overnight on Wall Street, the Dow Jones industrial average on Thursday closed down just 16 points after falling more than 340 points during the day, pulling off a dramatic late-session turnaround on massive bargain-hunting.

The Philippines and some other Asian markets tried to bounce back on Wall Street's late rally, but the Tokyo Stock Exchange opened weak and fell throughout the day. The Nikkei 225 lost 5.42 to close at its lowest level since August last year.

Taking cue from US

Dealers yesterday said Philippine share prices will take their cue from the US stock market amid the continuing global concerns over the credit problems there.

They said the local bourse had failed to react to favorable local news as investors remain too caught up in fears over the tightening of the global credit market due to problems in the US housing market.

"The Dow Jones Industrial average is close to an important support level at 12,800 level. A rebound in the US market will propel the local market back above 3,000," forecast Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities.

However, he warned that "a break of the 12,800 support [level] can have disastrous consequences."

Risky home loans

Asian markets, alongside global markets elsewhere in the world, have been sold off since late July when the subprime problems associated with risky home loans first became evident through losses to major New York hedge funds.

Falls on the stock markets have accelerated since then, when most benchmarks were trading at record or multi-year highs.

However, dealers remain uncertain how far the markets can go before bottoming out because many feel the full extent of the subprime problems are yet to be made public.

In the Philippines yesterday, losers swamped gainers 109 to 21, with 25 issues unchanged. Leading retreaters are the depositary receipts of recently listed broadcast company GMA Network and property developers Megaworld Corp. and Ayala Land.

Traders said the prospects of an extended weekend may have also nudged still jittery investors to take profit on morning gains.

Financial markets will be closed on Monday for a holiday commemorating the martyrdom of opposition leader Benigno Aquino Jr. *Reuters, AFP and AP*

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RP wins $425-M case over Naia 3

From page A1

and progress. Work on Naia Terminal 3 will continue with more vigor and sharp focus on safety and convenience. I commend the Office of the Solicitor General and the policy group led by Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita for this hard-earned legal victory which has also vindicated us in the eyes of the world," the President later said in a statement.

Fraport, the principal investor in the Philippine International Air Terminals Corp. (Piatco) consortium that built Naia 3, went to the World Bank to recover the $425 million that it said it had invested in the project after the Philippine government seized the terminal in December 2004 following the Supreme Court's voiding of the Piatco contract to build and operate the terminal.

The German firm also claimed protection for its investment under a bilateral investment treaty between Germany and the Philippines.

Devanadera said the ruling by the Washington, D.C.-based ICSID—an arbitration body set up by the World Bank to facilitate the settlement of investment disputes among member countries—"is not just a victory of an airport, it is a victory of a sovereign state, of the Philippine institutions [which] were maligned and accused of being unfair, of being corrupt."

Violations of RP laws

She said the moral victory which the government won in the eyes of the world was "the bigger victory" as Fraport had made the allegation that it was the Philippine government, its institutions and officials that had committed fraud.

"But in this case, the allegations of the Philippine government were actually affirmed and upheld by the ICSID, saying that the case filed by Fraport must be dismissed because in the first place, Fraport made a lot of violations of the laws of the Philippines," said Devanadera.

The ruling has "shown the world that foreign investors in the Philippines are given fair treatment and that if foreign investors are the ones guilty of violating the laws of the Philippines, there cannot be any protection that can be given," she said.

In Frankfurt, Fraport announced the ICSID decision on its suit, sending the firm's shares down almost 5 percent.

Fraport said it was "investigating the decision as well as further actions in this matter," a Reuters report said.

Naia 3 was approved for construction in 1997 and was originally scheduled to open in late 2002.

In 2002, however, the Arroyo administration voided Piatco's contract on the grounds that certain provisions were illegally renegotiated by ousted President Joseph Estrada in 1998 to the disadvantage of the government.

SC nullifies contract

The Supreme Court upheld the government, nullifying the Piatco contract in 2003. The Pasay City court issued a writ of possession in favor of the government the following year. However, it ordered the government to make an initial payment of P3 billion to Piatco while a study to determine the actual cost of the terminal to validate Piatco's claim to compensation was pending.

Fraport brought its case for compensation to the World Bank while Piatco sought a separate arbitration with the Singapore-based International Chamber of Commerce Arbitration Tribunal. In August 2006, the ICC ordered the government to return the facility to Piatco or pay the P3 billion.

While the P3 billion has apparently been paid, the 189,000-sq.m. facility remains closed while various construction and repair works are being completed and lease contracts with airlines and concessionaires are being negotiated.

The President said last month that the terminal, with a capacity of 13 million passengers a year, would hopefully be ready for business by the end of the year.

The decision

In a 194-page decision, the ICSID sustained the Philippine government's contention that the "dispute is not within its jurisdiction."

In its request for arbitration, Fraport claimed to own 44 percent of Piatco, "directly and indirectly through cascade companies that have equity ownership in Piatco," said Devanadera.

Fraport claimed that it was entitled to a refund of its investment of $425 million (P19.5 billion) and made imputations of unfair and inequitable treatment, violation of minimum standards of justice and expropriation against the Philippine government.

"If we add the other claims for interest and the cost of arbitration had we lost the case, the Philippines would have been liable for P27.6 billion," Devanadera said.

The Philippine government, however, refused to pay the amount and instead accused Fraport of wrongdoing.

It submitted to ICSID the Supreme Court ruling declaring the Piatco contract null and void *ab initio* for violating the Constitution, the build-operate-transfer law and the rules on public bidding.

The government challenged the ICSID's jurisdiction over the case on the ground that the protection afforded by the Philippines' bilateral investment treaty with Germany did not extend to investments made in violation of Philippine laws.

It argued that the Naia 3 concession was a public utility subject to nationality restrictions imposed by the Constitution and the prohibitions of the Anti-Dummy Law, and that Fraport openly sought to evade the nationality requirement limiting foreign ownership to 40 percent.

It also submitted the justice department finding that Fraport was guilty of violating the Anti-Dummy Law.

Piatco had claimed to be 60-percent owned by the Chinese-Filipino Cheng family, 30 percent by Fraport and 10 percent by the Nissho Iway Corp. of Japan.

But in the Anti-Dummy Law case it filed against Piatco and Fraport officials, the government alleged that through a fraudulent scheme of corporate layering, Fraport actually owned 61.4 percent of Piatco.

The ICSID decision, which Devanadera said would no longer be subject to motions for reconsideration, has removed a major legal obstacle to the operation of the Naia 3.

She said it would adversely affect Piatco's case against the Philippines in Singapore although the Fraport issue was separate from Piatco's.

Safety issues

Devanadera said hearings on the Piatco case at the ICC would be conducted during the first three weeks of November.

As for the expropriation case still pending with the Pasay City Regional Trial Court, Piatco's claim for compensation is the subject of haggling, after the initial P3 billion was paid, she said.

Devanadera said it was no longer the legal issues that were standing in the way of opening the terminal but the safety issues. A long-delayed opening last year was delayed after a section of the ceiling collapsed and the facility was then found to be structurally defective.

Favorable

According to lawyer Manuel Gaite, deputy executive secretary for legal affairs, the ICSID ruling would be favorable to the two-year negotiations with Takenaka Corp., Piatco's Japan-based general contractor which has its own compensation claims against Piatco, to undertake repairs and complete the construction of the terminal.

"At least Takenaka will be more confident of dealing with the Philippine government. They were always afraid [of] Piatco getting back at them," said Gaite.

Alfonso Cusi, general manager of the Manila International Airport Authority, said the ICSID decision was "a big victory" and assured the public the Miaa would open Naia 3 "as promptly and expeditiously as possible within the parameters that the law allows us."

He said the terminal was "almost 98 percent complete."

The Villaraza & Angangco law office whose principal, Arthur Villaraza, the then private lawyer of Ms Arroyo, was accused by Fraport of demanding tens of millions of dollars in extortion money, said the ICSID decision was a "vindication for all Filipinos."

Several lawyers of the firm filed libel cases against Fraport officials for the extortion allegations which were included in the German firm's submissions to the ICSID.

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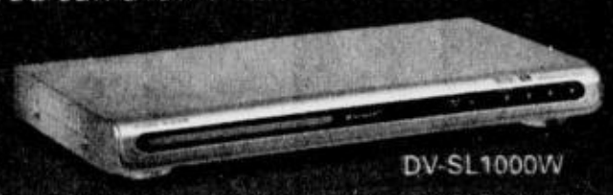

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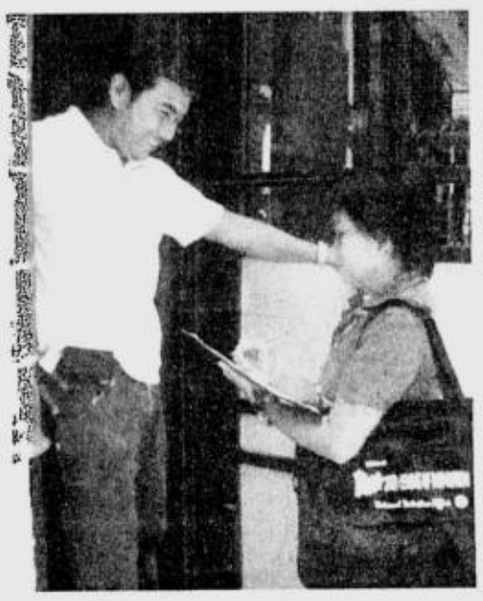

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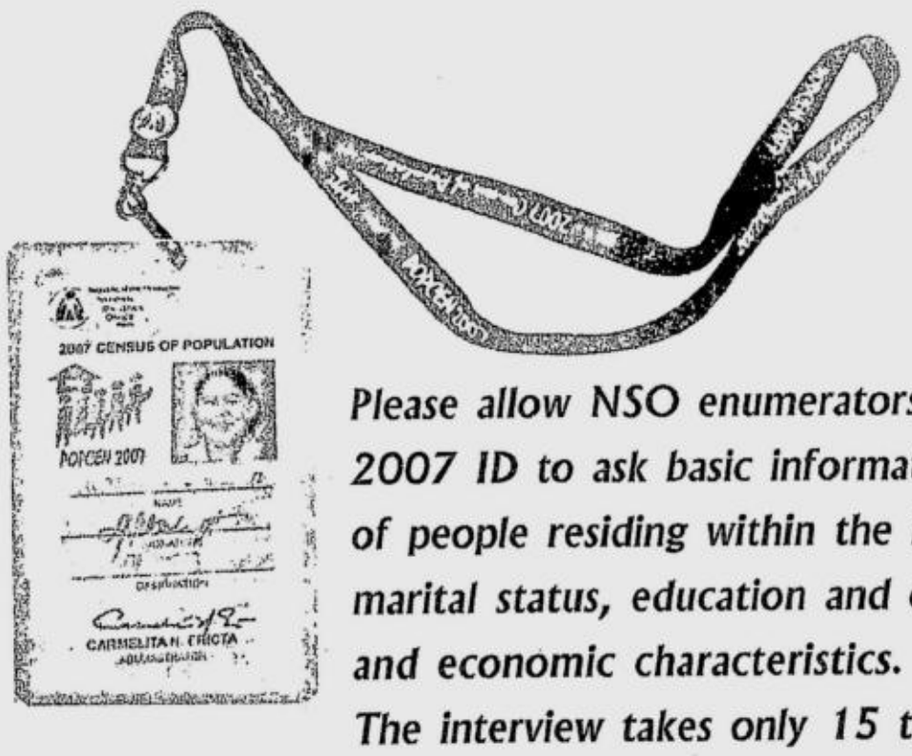

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Cash-strapped Abu Sayyaf uses YouTube to raise funds

By Christine O. Avendaño

ONCE AWASH WITH CASH FROM ransom they collected from kidnapping foreign tourists, the Abu Sayyaf bandits are now desperate for financial and material help and are "in disarray, " the military said yesterday.

Military officials made the claim after viewing a 62-minute video posted on the Internet, which features two top Abu Sayyaf leaders—the brothers Khadaffy and Abdurajak Janjalani—making the appeal for support in Arabic.

The two Janjalanis are now dead, having been killed in fighting with government troops.

The video, titled "Abu Sayyaf Group: Filipino Lions Are Coming" and available in YouTube, shows the two brothers making separate appeals for financial support for the Abu Sayyaf Group—described in the video as an "Islamic movement."

It was released at a time when the military was carrying out a renewed offensive against the terrorist group in Sulu and Basilan.

"If you will look at the video, these are old video ... and if you will notice, those speaking there are the former ASG commanders, the two Janjalanis," military information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro told reporters.

'Just a propaganda'

"Why is (it) that the former leadership of the ASG are speaking? Why not the current leadership, why the dead?" he asked.

Abdurajak Janjalani was killed in an encounter with Basilan police in 1998 while his brother, Khadaffy, was killed in a military encounter in Sulu in September last year.

It was only in January this year that Khadaffy's death was confirmed.

Bacarro dismissed the video as "just a propaganda," pointing out that the ASG was portraying itself as an Islamic movement.

Success in fighting terrorism

Bacarro quoted the ASG as saying in the video that "their militant acts are not for personal or political gains."

"But would you call the acts such as abduction for purposes of getting money, kidnapping, beheading, raping of women—would you consider that an act to pursue their end state? I don't think so," Bacarro said.

Regarding the Abu Sayyaf appeal for material and financial support, he said this was an indication of "how effective the government is—the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines, as well as as other law enforcement (agencies), relative to the fight against terrorism."

No more support

Bacarro said the group was "in disarray" and now appealing for help from the international community because the military was able to prevent them from their "resource-generating activities."

"It just shows that they are really having difficulty, particularly in their resource generation," Bacarro said.

"They have admitted in the video the conditions that they are in—there is lack of ammunition, lack of armaments, lack of medicine and so forth," he said.

Bacarro also said this showed the people in Mindanao did not want to support the ASG anymore.

He said the international community "should not fall victims to the trap of this propaganda."

Biazon sees pattern in 2 Basilan ...

From page A1

Marines and the beheading of 10 of them in a seven-hour ambush of a military convoy in Al-Barka.

But Biazon, who chairs the Senate committee on national security and defense, said he had also told Trillanes that the witnesses should formally present their accusations.

Trillanes, a former Navy lieutenant accused of coup d'etat for leading the Oakwood mutiny in July 2003, filed on Tuesday a resolution seeking a Senate inquiry into "insider information" that Palace officials had had a hand in the Al-Barka ambush.

"In our discussion, [the information] seemed to [indicate that] there might have been a relation between the [Al-Barka] incident and the Lamitan incident—almost the same circumstances, the same results, in the fact that soldiers were killed," Biazon said.

"There is a parallelism," he said.

Surrounded

On June 2, 2001, scores of fleeing Abu Sayyaf bandits were surrounded by government troops in the Jose Torres Memorial Hospital compound in Lamitan.

But after several hours of heavy fighting, all the cornered bandits managed to escape with their hostages, leaving a number of soldiers killed.

It was later alleged that ranking military officials had held back the troops and delayed reinforcements to allow the bandits to escape. Congress investigated the alleged collusion but in the end, no military official was found liable.

"In Lamitan, wasn't there a reinforcement order by the brigade commander [that was] countermanded? There are other parallelisms I cannot discuss at this point," Biazon said yesterday.

Biazon said the Senate should look into Trillanes' allegation of a conspiracy behind the Al-Barka ambush in the wake of similar claims made by other military officials.

He was referring to the INQUIRER report on Aug. 17 quoting an unnamed general who claimed that a key political figure in Basilan had had a hand in the incident, and was using the military for his own ends against the Abu Sayyaf.

Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar, the former governor of the province, had denied having anything to do with the killings, and identified four alleged Abu Sayyaf members as responsible for the beheadings.

Some officials responsible

Biazon said it appeared that certain officials were responsible for the soldiers' deaths. "That is not my conclusion; this is coming out from news items," he said, refusing to elaborate.

The fighting between government troops and Moro insurgents in Basilan has since spilled over to Sulu. Exactly a month after the 14 Marines were killed, 26 soldiers died in ambushes and encounters in Sulu.

"What is happening now in Sulu is a consequence of what happened in Basilan," Biazon said, referring to the redeployment of troops from Basilan to Sulu to go after the perpetrators of the brutal killings on July 10.

Biazon said Trillanes had given him a fairly good idea of the identities of the ranking officials who supposedly machinated the Al-Barka ambush, as well as the witnesses.

"Trillanes shared with me much information that was not written in his resolution, information so sensitive that at this point, the identities of [the involved] officials are best left unpublished," Biazon said.

He declined to answer when asked how high in rank these officials were.

He also refused to say how many witnesses there were, but said Trillanes had indicated that "some are soldiers and some are civilians."

"At the moment, the indication is that the witnesses are willing to come out and testify," he said.

Witnesses' security

Biazon said the information that Trillanes had provided so far could serve as basis for holding committee hearings.

"But I need more than this, at least something that can be made formal. We have to know whom to call," he said.

From the information he has gathered, Biazon is considering holding an executive session to protect the witnesses.

He said he would wait for Trillanes to tell the witnesses to submit sworn statements. "Otherwise, I will seek them out."

Biazon said the witnesses had spoken only with Trillanes. "To me, the main factor is the security of these people because the information shared is very sensitive," he said.

He also insisted on having Trillanes attend the committee hearings. He said he would suggest to the other committee members that the hearings be held at the Marine brig just so the latter could participate.

"This is a serious issue that affects not only the morale of the soldiers..." Biazon said.

He said that if it would not be resolved, he hoped it would not result in "certain consequences that could destabilize the AFP."

Trillanes has been barred by the Makati Regional Trial Court from attending Senate sessions.

No way

At a news briefing in Camp Aguinaldo, AFP information chief Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said the ground commanders in Basilan would not "allow themselves to be used" by politicians, as the unnamed general had claimed to the INQUIRER.

"No commander in his right mind would allow his men to get into a situation that would harm them," Bacarro said.

Told that it was Trillanes who had first made the claim that the Marine troops were "fed to the enemy," Bacarro said the detained senator might have sources telling him so, "but that's not happening."

"Because once you go out with your troops, you become responsible for their families as well," he said.

Asked whether the allegation was just an intrigue against the AFP, Bacarro said there might be some groups wanting to cause a rift within the military.

"But I'm happy to say these efforts will continue to fail because our soldiers, especially the Marines, are focused on their mandate," Bacarro said. "There have always been efforts to create that sense of divisiveness, but I would like to say that the AFP remains one solid organization, and we will not allow such a thing to happen." *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

SMALL COMFORT: Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, Solcom chief, tells the Camelon family that 2nd Lt. Charlie Anthony Camelon will be buried with full military honors. From left is the late officer's father, retired M/Sgt. Miguelito Camelon (white shirt), mother Aloha and sister Krisha.

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French				
Others (specify)				

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Language	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair
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French				
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Blind Chinese leads way in fight for rights of poor

From page A1

to assert their legitimate rights under the law." There will be a recognition ceremony on Aug. 31 to honor him and six other awardees but Chen will not be able to attend. He is currently in prison in China serving a four-year and three-month sentence after he was found guilty of "gathering crowds to disrupt traffic order."

Chen Guangcheng was born on Nov. 12, 1971 in a remote village in Yinan County, Linyi City in Shandong, a coastal province on the eastern edge of northern China. The youngest child of a peasant family, he spent most of his early years at home having no access to formal education due to his disability.

Chen attended Linyi Elementary School for the Blind (1989 to 1994) and the Qindao School for the Blind (1994 to 1998). At about this time, he taught himself English and studied the Chinese legal system also on his own. From 1998 to 2001, he took advantage of a privilege to study acupuncture and massage, the programs offered to the disabled at the Nanjing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine.

Village consultant

In 1996, Chen had his first recorded direct experience with Chinese bureaucracy. He went to the tax office in Beijing to complain that his parents were made to pay taxes for him even when he was exempted due to his disability. To his surprise, his parents were refunded. His success in Beijing encouraged the village handicapped and farmers to consult him for their own legal problems.

Upon his return from Nanjing in 2001, he organized farmers from his hometown and 78 surrounding villages to protest the pollution of their stream by a paper mill since 1988. When their protests were ignored by the company and local authorities, Chen and village leaders presented their case before western diplomats and journalists. The British Embassy responded by supporting the construction of a deep well with irrigation and potable water pipelines to bring clean water into the affected areas.

Fight for human rights

From 2000 to 2001, he initiated and managed the program of protecting the human rights of the handicapped under the auspices of the China Law Society, an initiative supported by the Federal Foundation of Britain.

Records show that Chen's dealings with the British Embassy prompted local government to call him for interrogation. It is the first record of local government taking notice of Chen's activities. It was also about this time that the international media became aware of Chen. The March 2002 issue of Newsweek Magazine had a good-looking Chen Guangcheng on its cover to highlight its lead feature on China's country lawyers.

In 2003, Chen was recommended and participated in the International Visitor Leadership Program of the United States Department of State; he was in the United States for one month. In 2004, he managed the Citizen Awareness and Law for the Disabled Project with the support of the US National Endowment for Democracy and the Monica Fund.

By 2005, Chen then married to Yuan Weijing with whom he has two young children, looked into reports that local officials were forcing abortions and sterilizations among couples with two children in Linyi. A news release on Aug. 27, 2005 by the Washington Post Foreign Service tells of villagers' accounts of their ordeal to Chen.

The report cited the case of one woman, seven months pregnant, who was on the run from authorities when she learned that more than a dozen of her relatives were being held until she returned. The hostages, the report said, were not given food and water and were beaten. The woman had no choice but to surrender; her baby was aborted and she was forced to submit to sterilization.

Forced abortions

With a population of 1.3 billion, China is the most populated country in the world. Current projections estimate a population of anywhere from 1.4 to 1.6 billion in 2025, prompting government to aim at stabilizing population growth within the next few years.

It encourages the one-child policy in urban areas, a policy that first surfaced in the late 1970s under Deng Xiaoping, although rural areas and ethnic minorities are exempt from this policy.

In September 2002, government issued the new Population and Family Planning Law to standardize policies and practices in the implementation of family planning policies across the country and to safeguard the rights of the people. Incorporated in the policy however are local birth quotas upheld by stiff penalties and rewards for the local authorities.

Officially, the government opposes forced abortion and sterilization but coercion in the towns and villages is reportedly common as local officials have to meet population targets.

Reports show that in July 2004, the Linyi City Party Committee and government issued a document outlining the program for strengthening population and fertility control. To implement the program, local officials in some districts of the city resorted to violent measures that resulted in forced abortions and sterilizations by the end of the year. By early 2005, the Linyi City government reissued the July 2004 document so that in March 2005, villagers felt the pressure from local authorities.

Chen gathered all documents to file a class lawsuit against the local officials involved. While the class lawsuit was not pursued, this is reportedly the first known concerted domestic effort to challenge the use of violence in the enforcement of China's population policy. News of the class-action suit was released by the Washington Post Foreign Service on Aug. 27, 2005.

Information leaks

The following month, the National Population and Family Planning Commission, the Cabinet-level ministry that manages population growth in China, sent a team to Linyi to investigate. According to the report of the Chinese Rights Defenders (CRD), a Chinese grass-roots advocacy group, the investigative team "found that there had been violations of law and policy in Linyi that had infringed the rights of citizens, and that as a consequence, some officials had been dismissed, while some were in detention and facing investigation for criminal responsibility."

In early August, Chen was placed under house arrest in his village. Toward the end of the month, he was able to escape to Beijing and, with the help of friends, met a reporter of Time Magazine, a Washington Post correspondent, foreign diplomats, and several lawyers based in Beijing who had volunteered to help in the lawsuit against Linyi authorities. On Sept. 6, 2005, while still in Beijing, Chen was seized by men who were later identified as police from Shandong province and Linyi.

The CRD report says that Chen was supposedly told by the Linyi Public Security Bureau that he was being held for revealing news information to foreign media and for illegally providing intelligence to foreign countries. The following day he was placed on house arrest.

Threats, arrests

Since then, Chen along with his family, friends, lawyers, neighbors and anyone else who showed support for or offered help to Chen were subjected to harassment, threats, arrests and assaults.

On March 11, 2006, Chen and two of his neighbors, one of whom was badly beaten and bleeding at that time, were brought to the Yinan County Public Security Bureau. When he learned that the man was beaten while on his way home by four hooded persons with sticks and other weapons, Chen faced Yinan County officials and demanded an explanation. Local villagers began to

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Guangcheng (here with wife Yuan Weijing and child) has been the strong lations of human rights in his village such as forced abortions and who already have two children as it goes against China's One-Child Policy.

crowd around Chen and the situation became a test of will between Chen and the villagers versus the local police. Violence erupted.

Sentenced to 4 years in jail

On Aug. 24, 2006, the People's Court of Yinan County sentenced Chen Guangcheng to four years and three months in prison on charges of willfully damaging property and organizing a mob to disturb traffic. A Xinhua news report dated Aug. 8, 2006 says that court documents claim Cheng Guangcheng "...organized a group of people ... under the excuse of seeking justice ... They interrupted traffic in the Yinghou Village section of the National Highway 205 ... Chen Guangcheng stood in the middle of the road to stop vehicles and directed the mob ... to yell out and stop traffic..." The CRD reports that witnesses were detained, interrogated, and tortured until they confessed that Chen took the lead in mobilizing villagers to block traffic.

Classic hero

The case was submitted for appeal before the Linyi Municipal People's Intermediate Court which, according to the CRD report, "rejected the lower Yinan County Court verdict" and sent back the case to the lower court for retrial. On Dec. 1, 2006, the lower court again convicted Chen Guangcheng for the same crimes and imposed the same sentence. This time, the appeals court upheld the sentence and charged Chen Guangcheng guilty of "gathering crowds to disrupt traffic order" after a closed-door hearing.

His family and human rights groups in China are actively working for Chen's release. They have called on the United Nations human rights bodies, the international community, the media, and other governments to study the case and lobby for Chen.

Chen Guangcheng's story is now being told across the globe. On April 30, 2006, he was in Time Magazine's list of "2006's Top 100 People Who Shape Our World" in the category of "Heroes and Pioneers."

In an interview with Time Magazine, Chen said: "Someone has to fight for people with no voice. I guess that person is me."

Chen is definitely a classic hero.

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An embarrassing flop

EDITORIAL

IT WAS SUPPOSED TO BE A SPECTACULAR SHOW of the Arroyo administration's extreme displeasure with smugglers and smuggling. But the destruction last Thursday of 18 motor vehicles at the Subic Bay Freeport only served to highlight how puny and pathetic are the government's efforts to stamp out the scourge.

Upon being told last week that several luxury vehicles had been seized at Subic for nonpayment of duties and taxes, President Macapagal-Arroyo promptly ordered that all of them be reduced to scrap. The list of vehicles included some that any car enthusiast would give an arm and a leg to own: a Lamborghini, a Ferrari, a Corvette, a Porsche Carrera, a Porsche Cayenne, a handful of BMWs. The head of the Presidential Anti-Smuggling Task Force, Antonio Villar, said some of these cars cost P18 million each or more. And if sold at auction, Villar said, the whole lot could fetch as much as P100 million.

The President, however, rejected that suggestion to hold an auction, even if that would have helped narrow somewhat the budget deficit. A sell-off would only end with the smugglers themselves getting back the cars, she believed. She wanted them to lose everything they had invested in that illegal venture, according to Cerge Remonde, chief of the Presidential Management Staff, and she wanted to send a strong message that her administration was serious about stopping smuggling. The President was very angry, Remonde said. Her order was to destroy the cars, and she would be right there to witness what was going to be a well-publicized event.

The media were there for the carnival last Thursday and so were top officials of the Bureau of Customs, Department of Finance and Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority. Ms Arroyo, however, was a no-show, reportedly because her back-up helicopter developed some trouble. Still the show went on—minus the stars: the flashy cars that she had ordered crushed to a pulp. Sure, giant backhoes tore up a Lincoln Navigator and three BMW X5 SUVs, but the 14 other vehicles destroyed were not the type or in a condition anyone would associate with luxury. As one spectator, who claimed to have once engaged in vehicle smuggling, scoffed, some of the cars "looked like garbage." And all together those cars could not have been worth more than P4.5 million, he estimated.

What happened to the Lamborghini, Ferrari, Porsche, etc., whose total value was estimated to be close to P100 million? It seems that the finance and customs officials suddenly developed cold feet at the last minute. Finance Secretary Gary Teves said the owners of those 14 flashy cars were questioning the legality of their confiscation and wanted to just ship them back to their ports of origin. "We will have to hurdle the legal processes first," he said.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said the problem was that until last month, the SBMA had no rules covering abandoned vehicles. It is only now, under a new memorandum of agreement between the Bureau of Customs and the SBMA, that importers are given 60 days to clear their shipments, before these are classified as "abandoned" and only then may they be auctioned or destroyed. But since the cars arrived in February, they cannot be retroactively covered by this rule, he said.

In other words, the importers who didn't offer to pay the appropriate import duties for all of six months and just waited and waited to get those cars by some other mysterious ways may yet get back everything they paid for them. Meaning, the government will have no taxes, no cars, no income, and not even a good show of punishing sinners.

Where does this leave the President who wanted to put up an anti-smuggling show? Did she issue an illegal order or one that was of doubtful legality? Why did nobody tell her before she gave the signal to make her order public? Is she not getting good legal advice?

If it is of doubtful legality to seize and destroy the 14 luxury cars, what was the legal basis for consigning to the scrap heap the 18 cheaper vehicles? It seems that by putting up that show in Subic, finance and customs officials were trying to humor the President. What they have accomplished is to embarrass her and to demonstrate how lightly they take her avowed intention to curb smuggling.

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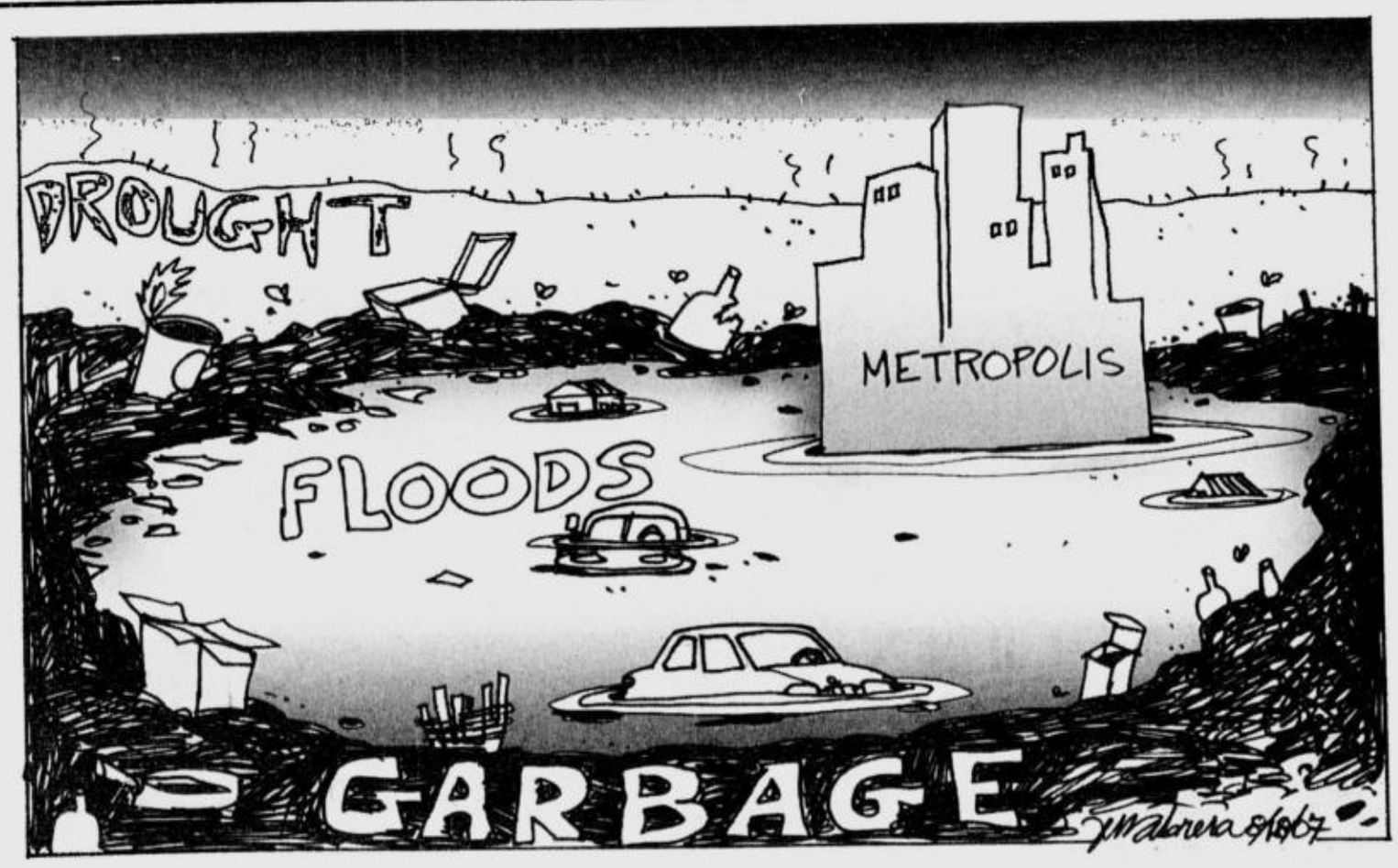

Mapping Mindanao

PUBLIC LIVES

Randy David

ALL OF US CARRY IN OUR MINDS A MAP OF the place in which we live or work—as natives or as settlers, as residents or as commuters. This map will never correspond point by point with the area it seeks to represent. There will be many other maps of the same place, reflecting a variety of purposes and destinations. Of every map, one can only ask how useful or practical it is, not whether it is a truer representation of the world.

In the light of the recent killing of an unprecedented number of soldiers in three encounters/ambushes in Basilan and Sulu, one is prompted to ask if the soldiers' map of Mindanao is serving them well. The nation's soldiers may not only be performing their tasks in unfamiliar terrain, they might also be operating with a misleading map, one that is more ideological than functional.

Let's take a look at some of the key features of this map. First, it makes a distinction between armed individuals and armed groups. In Muslim Mindanao, every adult male is presumed to own a firearm, but not everyone is a member of an armed group. Only the latter are on the military radar screen. Then it marks out "terrorist" armed groups (like the Abu Sayyaf) from the other armed groups (such as the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the Moro National Liberation Front) with which the government has ceasefire agreements. Only the former are the overt target of military operations.

Third, it separates the mainstream MNLF from a so-called "Misuari Breakaway Group" of the MNLF. The former is treated as an ally of the government, while the latter is perceived to be hostile. Fourth, it distinguishes between the regular forces of the MILF, MNLF and Abu Sayyaf, on one hand, and the armed "lost commands" and rogue elements engaged in banditry. The latter create a big problem for the police, but the bigger problem is the one posed by Abu Sayyaf extremists. How useful are these distinctions? How practical are they in the field?

As with all forms of internal references, one will only know how well a particular map works by observing other maps at work.

The most important social network in Muslim Mindanao is the kinship group; people locate themselves above all in a map of extended families. Individuals may join the government, or the PNP or the Armed Forces, or—for that matter, the MILF or the MNLF or the Abu Sayyaf, but in doing so, they do not cease to be members of kinship networks. Here, an injury committed against one member is taken as an injury against the whole kin group.

A soldier might imagine a clear-cut delineation of the different Moro groups. Nothing would be more mistaken. It is common knowledge that many of the founding leaders of the Abu Sayyaf were children of MNLF warriors, and that the MNLF and the MILF themselves used to belong to one movement. While these two major groups have gone their separate ways to fight or negotiate with the Philippine government, one cannot underestimate the shared goal of a Moro homeland that works as an unbreakable link connecting all Moro rebels.

The map that locals use may distinguish clans, ethnic groups and Moro armed organizations from one another. It may mark out Muslims from Lumads and Christians but, in general, it will not distinguish between "terrorists" and non-terrorists. Locals do not care much whether an armed group is listed in the US registry of Foreign Terrorist Organizations. When such a map is at work, a family will give sanctuary to a rebel for no other reason than because he is a relative. A kin group's map is blind to a warrior's specific organizational affiliation.

The July 10 ambush of a Marine unit in Basilan, which resulted in the death of 14 soldiers, and the beheading of 10 of them, perhaps illustrates the tragic consequences of using a faulty map. The initial military accounts told of a surprise encounter with the Abu Sayyaf by forces looking for the kidnappers of Fr. Giancarlo Bossi. To the surprise of the government, the MILF announced that it was in fact its forces that figured in the skirmish, even as it denied responsibility for the beheadings. The MILF justified its men's action as self-defense, claiming that the soldiers had intruded into "their" territory without coordinating with local officials of the area.

Under pressure to preserve the ceasefire and save the peace talks with the MILF, the government showed unusual restraint in the treatment of the incident. But this was followed by two other encounters in Jolo, resulting in the death of 60 people, including 27 soldiers. Again, the Abu Sayyaf was singled out as the culprit. But the MNLF said it was their forces that were involved. It is more likely that the soldiers had encountered a composite force of Islamic rebels. Identifying them as Abu Sayyaf terrorists has its uses. It confers on these battles the credentials of a global anti-terrorist effort. As important, it provides a warrant for the disturbing presence of foreign troops in Mindanao's combat zones.

But the costs are high. So long as we insist on seeing the Mindanao conflict primarily through the lenses of the global war on terror, we will never grasp the complex reality of the struggle for an independent Moro homeland. Every administration oscillates between war and appeasement in a bid to corrupt, divide and break the Moro rebellion. More of our soldiers will die as a result of this thoughtless policy, and many more innocent lives will be lost in the process.

* * *

Comments to public.lives@gmail.com

The persuasive powers of GSIS

GET REAL

Solita Collas-Monsod

WHETHER ONE SHOULD ASCRIBE IT TO THE political power of the Garcias of Cebu, or to the persuasive/intimidating power of the very large amounts of GSIS funds, or to the sheer ineptitude of some members of the House of Representatives (or some combination of the three), it remains incontrovertible that: (1) despite two years of joint investigation (amid great media hoopla) of the GSIS' sins of commission and omission, the House committees on good government and on government enterprises have failed to come up with any report at all—and, of course, no more report is forthcoming because the 13th Congress is dead and gone; (2) despite more than two years of study (28 months), the Office of the Ombudsman still has not come up with any action or recommendation on the report submitted to it by the Commission on Audit (COA) regarding the aforementioned sins of the GSIS.

At the same time, a preliminary injunction issued by the Court of Appeals on Sept. 23, 2005 (or almost two years ago), stopping the Special Audit Team (SAT) of the COA from acting on its findings regarding these GSIS sins until such time as it (the Court of Appeals) could study the case, has yet to be lifted. Presumably, the court hasn't finished its review. It bears observing that the *ponente* of the injunction was Associate Justice Elvi John Asuncion, who has since been kicked out of office by the Supreme Court.

So much for the persuasive powers of the GSIS and its seemingly bottomless resources. Not content with persuasion, it has also gone on an intimidation mode by filing a total of three administrative and three criminal cases against the SAT team with the Office of the Ombudsman: two against team supervisor Leonor Boado, and four against Boado and the four-person team. The GSIS has also filed a civil case for damages against the SAT in Cebu (note the location), and another case for indirect contempt against Boado in the Court of Appeals.

Why can the cases be intimidating? Because, dear readers, the respondents in the cases are on their own, as far as defending themselves is concerned. Unlike, say, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, where the legal fees incurred by its officers and employees who are respondents in various suits are paid for by the BSP, the COA has no funds allocated for protecting their employees and auditors, who are underpaid to begin with. Under those circumstances, where the auditors are vulnerable to financial ruin, it is amazing that unfavorable audit reports are even issued at all—or to put it differently, it is little wonder that the reports are so cautiously couched.

Which is why I salute Boado and her team, composed of Joel S. Estolatan, Rhoda M. Pelena, Alexander B. Juliano and Rosalinda Salvador, for sticking it out, through thick and thin. Mostly thin: Boado is no longer with the Legal and Adjudication Office (her unit was dissolved last year) of the COA, having been transferred to the one handling local governments. She has apparently been bypassed for promotion, since a lot of her former subordinates now hold higher positions than she does. Take note that she is highly qualified: a lawyer-CPA, teaching law in three different colleges (she has to augment her COA salary), and author of a textbook on criminal law.

But what are the alleged sins of commission and omission of the GSIS, for which, ironically, Boado and her SAT are being punished? The SAT found them in five areas, including the eCard project, involving what the SAT considered a void contract between the GSIS and Union Bank (owned by the Aboitizes of, you guessed it, Cebu); the ridiculously high compensation and benefit packages of GSIS officials (including its board of directors or trustees—one top official allegedly retired after two years of service with a P13 million lump sum payment and a P93,000 a month lifetime pension); and the cash advances covering discretionary allowances (including, I have been informed, that the liquidation of GSIS president Winston Garcia's cash advances does not involve any receipts, but mere "certifications" of expenditure on his part).

The largesse and the generosity of the GSIS toward its own officers, as well as its huge public relations fund (P77 million in 2003, P144 million in 2004), are particularly grating in the light of its stinginess toward its members. In 2005, it removed the 13th month allowance it was giving its pensioners; and just this year, it limited the survivorship pensions (for widows and widowers) to five years, where before they were lifetime beneficiaries.

I am still studying the eCard project, but already the odor of mendacity permeates. For example, the claim that Union Bank won the bid for the eCard project fair and square is hard to swallow, given that it was awarded the contract one day before the end of the bidding period, and only a week or less after submitting its proposal, and then had its application to be a depository bank for government funds approved by the Monetary Board within three days of getting the contract. When government acts with the speed of lightning, beware.

Then there is the puzzle as to why Union Bank should be favored over Land Bank, which at the time (2004) had more than three times as many branches as Union Bank, and more than five times as many ATM units. With GSIS members all over the Philippines, why even consider a bank with such a small network?

It stinks.

Conservatives, optimists, non-expectants and pessimists

SOCIAL CLIMATE

Mahar Mangahas

LOOKING TOWARDS THE FUTURE. EVERY SWS quarterly survey asks respondents if they think that their **quality of life** or "uri ng pamumuhay" over the coming 12 months will get better, get worse, or remain the same.

In the new round (June 2007) reported last Monday, 39 percent said it would not change, 32 percent said it would get better, and 11 percent said it would get worse. At present, most Filipinos are **conservatives**, almost as many are **optimists**, and a few are **pessimists**, with respect to their quality of life in the near future.

Completing the picture is a significant fourth group (18 percent) that said they Didn't Know, which was not one of the three choices of answers stated in the question. Such people, who say they have no expectation about their life's trend to the future even after being invited to choose from an all-inclusive set of expectations, are the **non-expectants**.

Non-expectants are more common than pessimists. One can say that, as of now, out of every ten Filipinos, four are conservatives, three are optimists, two are non-expectants, and only one is a pessimist, with respect to their future quality of life.

There are fewer non-expectants among Europeans. The Eurobarometer surveys of 1998-2004 showed that out of every ten Europeans, regularly about five were conservatives, three were optimists, "one-and-a-half" were pessimists, and only "one-half" was a non-expectant.

Thus one may say that there is less conservatism, equal optimism, less pessimism, and less concern about the future in the Philippines compared to Europe. Going by optimism and pessimism alone, Filipinos are, on balance or in "net" terms, more optimistic than Europeans.

The dominance of optimism over pessimism is quite common; it has been the case in 74 out of 84 national surveys from 1985 to the present. SWS has adopted the term **Fair** for values of Net Personal Optimism from +10 to +19, the median range.

SWS will henceforth describe as **High** net optimism values from +20 to +29—which includes the June 2007 value of +22 (correctly rounded). **Very High** will be for net optimism values of +30 and up; these have occurred in 5 percent of all surveys so far.

Mediocre is for net values of +1 to +9. **Low** is for -9 to 0. **Very Low** is for -10 or worse, which happened in 4 percent of all surveys.

Looking towards the past. Every SWS quarterly survey also asks respondents if they think that their quality of life now compared to 12 months ago became better, became worse, or remained the same.

The June 2007 survey found 40 percent saying there was no change in their quality of life, 39 percent saying it became worse, and only 21 percent saying it became better. These are the **neutrals**, the **losers**, and the **gainers** respectively. Hardly anyone said Don't Know when comparing the present to the past.

Finding more gainers than losers has been very rare; it only happened twice in 84 national surveys since 1985. As a result, SWS has adopted the term **Very High** for a Net Gainers score of +10 or more, which happened only once, and **High** for a Net Gainers score of +1 to +9, which also happened once.

SWS will use the term **Fair** for net scores of 0 to -9. The term **Mediocre** is for net scores of -19 to -10 (including the June 2007 Net Gainers finding of net -18). **Low** is for -29 to -20, and Very Low for -30 or worse. Using these categories, 11 percent of past survey readings were Fair, 27 percent were Mediocre, 29 percent were Low, and 31 percent were Very Low.

How do trends from the past translate into expectations of the future? Out of every 100 Filipinos, the 40 **neutrals** with a stable quality of life are made up of about 19 who expect it to stay ("conservative neutrals") as is, 11 who expect it to improve ("optimistic neutrals"), 7 who have no expectation ("non-expectant neutrals"), and 3 who expect it to worsen ("pessimistic neutrals").

Out of every 100 Filipinos, the 39 **losers** consist of 12 who expect their quality of life to stay ("conservative losers") and 11 who expect it to turn upward ("optimistic losers"), plus 9 "non-expectant losers" and 7 "pessimistic losers" who expect a turn for the worse.

Out of every 100 Filipinos, the 21 **gainers** are made up of 11 who expect further improvement ("optimistic gainers"), 7 who expect no change ("conservative gainers"), 2 "non-expectant gainers," and 1 "pessimistic gainer" expecting some reversal.

Thus the optimistic tendency of Filipinos as a group stems more from understandable optimism among gainers and neutrals than from possibly unrealistic optimism among losers.

Connection to GMA's popularity. Simple tabulations point to **losers** and **pessimists** as the dynamic groups to whom the low popularity of the President may be distinctly attributed.

In June 2007, the Net Satisfaction Rating of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo was -3, or close to neutral, with the satisfied and the dissatisfied evenly split. In particular, however, her Net Satisfaction Ratings of -19 among losers, and -14 among pessimists, were rather negative.

GMA's popularity does not really differ between gainers and neutrals, or between optimists and conservatives. The key to raising public satisfaction with her, insofar as trends in quality of life matter, is in helping slumping people to change direction.

[Thanks to Lynn Quiaoit for the computations, and to Gica Mangahas for the term "non-expectant"; errors are mine.] Contact SWS: www.sws.org.ph or mahar.mangahas@sws.org.ph.

'Read With Me'

COMMENTARY

Butch Hernandez

IN MY VISITS TO PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN THE last five years, the biggest class size that I personally encountered had 130 students packed cheek-by-jowl in standard-size classrooms, with only a slim concrete wall separating each room. The teachers had to use karaoke machines so they could be heard through the crowd buzz from their own students as well as from the adjacent classrooms.

But that's at the extreme end of things. The average class size in our public schools hovers at about 40 pupils per teacher, which is not so bad although far from ideal.

This topic came up when I had the chance to talk to Mark Watkinson, chief executive officer of Hongkong and Shanghai Bank Philippines. He had just concluded the kick-off ceremony for HSBC's "Read With Me" program for Makati City's PEMBO Elementary School (PEMBO ES) and its 1,030 Grade I pupils. He surmised that if circumstances—and scarce resources—prevented one from building more classrooms to trim down the class size, the next obvious answer would be to have more people work the room, as it were.

HSBC's Read With Me program sought to do just that by boosting the teacher's presence with highly motivated volunteers. In an amazing display of social commitment, HSBC allowed their volunteers to leave work for a couple of hours to go to PEMBO ES.

"We'll manage," Watkinson simply said when he was asked if that wouldn't affect the bank's operations.

The HSBC Read With Me program actually came to life when Watkinson first heard of the 57-75 movement's revolutionary "Resources for Results" approach to corporate philanthropy, and of the prioritizing of corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts for the improvement of the public education system.

HSBC has a very sophisticated CSR complement that already prioritizes education and child welfare. Putting together the Read With Me program for PEMBO ES was in the stars, in a manner of speaking. But there were a few kinks that needed to be threshed out, so Gigi Reyes, senior vice president, led a core team of bank executives to meet with Dr. Tet Arriola, PEMBO ES' principal.

HSBC would have no shortage of volunteers from its own ranks. In fact, volunteerism enjoys unparalleled support from their employees, many of whom had lent their time and effort to such worthy endeavors as Gawad Kalinga.

But helping Grade I pupils learn to read could be daunting. A grade school teacher is trained for this, but what about a young volunteer who may or may not have had some formal elementary education background?

The answer came from Dr. Evelyn "Eve" Mejillano, national coordinator of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power's Mentoring the Mentors, and Dr. Sol Francisco, an expert in reading from the UP College of Education. They pointed out that the responsibility for learning in class rests primarily with the teacher. A successful class time intervention therefore should highlight the teacher's instructional leadership while fostering a strong working relationship with the volunteer. Eve and Sol then drafted a simple teaching orientation seminar for both the HSBC volunteers and the PEMBO Grade I teachers to ensure that the Read With Me program would be well-grounded.

According to Sol, the Read With Me program uses the tried-and-tested four-pronged approach for beginning readers. This approach was pioneered in the '60s by the late Dr. Basilisa Manhit of the UP College of Education.

Without being too technical about it, the four-pronged approach seeks to bring the beginning reader into the realm of independent reading as efficiently as possible through activities that progressively engender in the young reader a genuine love for reading, a mastery of the language structure, reflexively critical thinking and good-to-excellent word attack skills.

Any competent grade school teacher in either public or private schools knows the whys and wherefores of the four-pronged approach. However, it does require a higher level of commitment from the teacher.

Tet herself showed unqualified support for Read With Me by allowing HSBC to implement the program during class hours, rather than after school. She correctly pointed out that Read With Me could maximize its impact on both her teachers and Grade I pupils who were integrated into the existing learning schedules. That way, the pupils—together with their parents or *yayas*—would not have to make the extra effort to come to school on Saturdays or stay behind during school days. Likewise, the teachers would not have to make drastic adjustments in their already crammed schedules.

And so, every Friday, Jor-el Soyangco, the young relationship manager from HSBC's Commercial Banking Group, rounds up over a hundred volunteer employees who troop over to PEMBO ES where the Grade I kids eagerly wait for them. They spend an hour or two of their workday with the children, reading and acting out words and phrases from big books like "Annie the Ant" and "Eggie the Egg" before a rapt audience. Maybe the volunteers were not aware of it, but just by being there they were already showing the PEMBO ES pupils a vision of their own future.

Butch Hernandez is the executive director of Foundation for Worldwide People Power and is a member of Task Force 57 75. He can be reached at butchhernandez@gmail.com.

Breaking the Isafp code

BETWEEN DEADLINES

HE CAN'T HELP HIMSELF. SPEAKER JOSE DE Venecia has already declared a personal moratorium on his life's quest to bring the country to the realm of progressive unicameral parliamentary states. It seems, however, that he can't keep himself from making a pitch for Charter change even when he speaks on non-political issues such as global warming.

"I filed the bill mandating the planting of a billion trees as early as three Congresses ago. It was passed by the House of Representatives three times but the Senate wasn't able to pass it," De Venecia said in a recent news forum. His remarks, of course, underscored the legislative gridlock supposedly inherent in a bicameral setup such as we have in the Philippines.

They also prompted one reporter on the sidelines of the forum to quip that De Venecia, yet again, was making a pitch for his pet initiative despite his declared moratorium.

This led Noel Albano, the House deputy secretary-general for information and one of the Speaker's closest aides, to explain away his boss: "It's subliminal," he said. *N. Bordadora*

* * *

AFTER THE MATCH, THE WATCH. The Filipino boxers who beat Team Mexico in last Sunday's Boxing World Cup came home not only wearing the mantle of victory; they were also burdened by the same bling-bling.

High-end IceLink watches glistened on the wrists of boxers AJ Banal, Michael Domingo, Z Gorres and Rey "Boom Boom" Bautista when they arrived early Wednesday morning.

The bulging watches caught the attention of the media.

The watches, Gorres said, were gifts from boxing legend Oscar de la Hoya, the owner of Golden Boy Promotions, the outfit that arranged the World Cup. Each was reportedly worth $5,000.

Asked about the accessory, Bautista, the only Filipino fighter to lose in the six-fight card, on account of a sprain, said: "*Mabigat nga eh ... Kaya nga namamaga braso ko.*" *T. Quismundo*

* * *

DOJ BATTLE ROYALE. After the libel cases of First Gentleman Mike Arroyo were abruptly pulled out of the Manila Regional Trial Court, the libel suit to watch out for is Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez's own case against a subordinate, assistant city prosecutor Ferrer Co.

Co pleaded not guilty to two libel counts and asked for a speedy trial; so expect Gonzalez to testify in the hearings set in the next two weeks. Odds are, their mutual enmity will be—how do we say this?—fully on display in the sala of Judge Silvino Pampilo Jr. *A. Lopez.*

* * *

CODING. The use of code names is almost a norm in the military, thus some officers could not understand the INQUIRER's fuss over "Emperor," the code name of Maj. Gen. Delfin Bangit, the controversial chief of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

(A story published in December and based on an insider's account of the Isafp Christmas party reported that Bangit threw away P500 bills amid shouts, by Isafp staff, of "Long Live the Emperor!")

In fact, according to Bangit's defenders, "Emperor" is just one item in the long list of code names used by Isafp chiefs. Some Isafp bosses, they pointed out, even continue to use their code names long after retirement. An example cited was Brig. Gen. Galileo Kintanar, who continued to be referred to as "Sultan" even after he had retired in the early 1990s.

But not all code names are as imperious-sounding as "Emperor" and "Sultan," one Isafp source said. Ex-Isafp chiefs Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus, Admiral Tirso Danga and Brig. Gen. Marlu Quevedo, for example, were known, respectively, as "Jasper," "Dasher" and "Starlight." *F. Zamora*

* * *

LAND FOR ALL, REPORTERS INCLUDED. The best defense, apparently, is still a good offense. Defending his acceptance of a "fantastic" case that involves Prince Julian Tallano, the alleged "owner" of the entire Philippine archipelago, lawyer and ex-politician Homobono Adaza resorted to attacking his critics. He took aim, in particular, at his colleague, Cagayan de Oro Rep. Rufus Rodriguez, who had described the new plunder case Tallano lodged against deposed President Joseph Estrada as a "tall story that will not sell."

A fuming Adaza retorted: "These people who are now raising questions, we do not graduate these people from the University of the Philippines anymore. That's why I'm surprised why they graduated from UP. For God's sake!"

"*Gamitin nila ang utak nila,*" Adaza, also a UP Law graduate, said. "They should study first the documents and it takes time to study the documents."

The enraged lawyer resolved that he will fight the Tallano case until "hell freezes over," so all poor Filipinos would have a piece of land to own. To the reporters interviewing him, he made a promise: "I assure you, if you do not have a piece of land [and] the moment this problem is resolved, *kalabitin niyo ako* ..."

He was not like other politicians who make promises only to break them later, he added. *J. Uy*

* * *

BLAST FROM THE PAST. From the Aug. 16, 1991 issue of the Philippine Daily Inquirer:

"I don't have the same (shoe) size as Imelda, *puede ba*," the President, who wears [size] six and a half pumps, corrected the claims of that lady in New York [Imelda Marcos, then residing in New York City] that she, a size eight and a half, had the same shoe fit as the President. Mrs. Marcos, of course, was implying that Cory Aquino has been helping herself to her showcase shoe collection at the Palace museum.

"It isn't as if I have no shoes of my own. I'm not that poor," the President laughed but could not conceal her irritation. The War of the Widows has begun on the wrong foot.

Dear God

YOUNG BLOOD

Nonna Leon

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

IT'S BEEN RAINING SINCE MANILA ARCHBISHOP GAUdencio Cardinal Rosales instructed the Catholic faithful to pray for rains to avert a water crisis. "Oratio Imperata Ad Petendam Pluviam " (Obligatory Prayer to Request for Rain) is what the appeal to heaven is called.

The rains may have brought the usual inconveniences—floods, traffic jams, getting wet. But we asked for rain, didn't we? Reports said water levels in some dams have risen. The looming water crisis doesn't sound as terrifying anymore. Ask and you shall receive.

Could there be an "Oratio Imperata" to request for a beloved? A prayer to end the drought in the love lives of single women like me? A prayer so effective as the prayer for rain so that in a matter of days, we would meet single, available, worthy men?

Being single never really bothered me. Until now.

I write this a few days before my 30th birthday. Somehow, the pressure of personal deadlines are more felt: to have a boyfriend, a husband, a child, a family, a home of my own.

A friend, who is also single, asked if I pray to God for "The One." I told her I do. At Mass. Before I go to bed. When I wake up in the morning. On my way to work. When my sister got married. When I first laid eyes on my nephew.

I even get down to specifics, because some friends have told me I should tell God what I really want. God already knows what one desires, of course, but He also wants to hear it straight from one's heart. And so, I recite my requirements in my prayers: I want Guy-For-Me to be funny, good-looking, smart, 5'8" to 5'11" tall. Doesn't matter if he's dark or fair. I want someone who is God-fearing and God-loving. Someone who's honest and humble. Someone who has goals, rather than ambition.

Early this year, I actually thought God had answered my prayers. A common friend introduced us, a "set-up" of some sort. He didn't take my breath away at first sight. He wasn't drop-dead gorgeous, but he had a cute, boyish smile. And a particularly nice voice that had a lilt and timbre that I found comforting.

Then came a few dinners. A couple of movies. An exchange of gifts. Some phone calls and text messages.

He was 5'9", funny, smart, humble. From our conversations, he seemed to be God-loving and to have a set of concrete, achievable goals in his life. And he wasn't ambitious.

There were little flirtations here and there. Little hints that he liked me (or so I thought).

I was starting to be comfortable with him. I began entertaining the thought that he could be my first boyfriend. I started dropping hints, too, that I liked him.

But somewhere along the way, in between a chocolate mousse we shared and a movie, I found out that he had met someone and she became his girlfriend.

I reeled. I was confused. I didn't get it. Didn't he just ask me out to a movie? Wasn't it a date?

To him, it wasn't. To him, it was what friends normally did. He told me he thought I understood that he only wanted to be friends with me.

That was two months ago. I still feel some pain, partly because I felt I had been duped and partly because I was almost in love with him.

On top of meeting nearly all my requirements (he failed the honesty part), there were other little things about him that captured my heart: his sideways glance with a lopsided grin, the way his eyes crinkled when he smiled, the way he smelled of soap with a hint of sun and grass, and his handsome build that I figured could shield me from harm.

After he broke my heart, I considered giving up on finding "The One."

I thought, maybe I wasn't meant to be a girlfriend, a wife, a mother. Wasn't meant to have my own family or my own home.

But inexplicably, I still can't help looking up to heaven and saying a prayer that one day soon, I will meet someone whom I'll love. And that he'll love me back.

Ask and you shall receive.

Maybe I'll bump into him in the rain.

Nonna Leon, 29, works for a major newspaper.

Urban living

Ayla Herazade E. Salendab

CAN A CITY DRIVE YOU NUTS?

Today, I woke up hoping there's nothing to do. My head hurts. Last night, the fan broke down and it was 32-degrees Celsius. I barely slept a wink.

It's ironic that a heat wave now sweeps the Metro when it should be raining hard. It's officially the "Wet Season" but instead of typhoons, the headlines yesterday told of a looming water crisis in the face of the low rainfall these past months.

We knew from high school that rising temperatures are caused by excessive air pollution. The issue seemed so distant then; now it has leapt out of the textbooks into real world. In fact, it has developed into a kind of moral issue.

Nobody dismisses it anymore as something trivial, especially in political circles. To be sure, politicians sound very serious about addressing the problems of pollution and climate change. But will the rhetoric be matched with political will?

Here, sadly, what we witness most is mere lip service. Joining the bandwagon of "concerned" states, we signed the Kyoto Protocol and passed such laws as the Clean Air Act of 1999 which calls for emission tests for vehicles and the phasing-out of two-stroke engines, among others. But we don't see or feel the most important aspect of the law—its implementation.

Smoke-belching vehicles, for instance, still speed through Edsa while the "blue rangers" of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority simply look on. Well, it's either the MMDA operatives are ignorant of the law's existence or the government is simply not serious about the law's intent. Whatever, one thing is clear: Most, if not all, of the environmental policies the government has adopted have so far been very good—on paper but not in practice. Our so-called leaders seem so eager to demonstrate they're doing something about environmental degradation, yet so cautious about ruffling powerful political and economic interests.

Thus, I pay the price for the kicks of urban life—I breathe carbon monoxide-rich air, I bathe with contaminated water, I walk on trash-packed grounds, and I endure noise pollution in traffic-congested roads, not to mention the health risks that come with the suddenly changing temperature.

Even now, in bed, I can hear a car alarm screaming, I can smell part of the smog coming from the busy street four stories below. It's Saturday, 1:30 pm. I'm going back to sleep.

Ayla Herazade E. Salendab, 20, is a 4th year BA Political Science student at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. She wrote this piece when Luzon was desperate for rain.

Concealed casualty of war

THE ECOWASTE COALITION IS deeply concerned with the escalating conflict in Basilan and Sulu and with its adverse social and psychological impact on local communities. Likewise, we are acutely concerned about the conflict's concealed casualty: the environment.

From various media accounts, we have come to know the painful social impact of the heightened armed offensive: dozens of soldiers and rebels killed, hundreds of residents displaced, community life disrupted. Behind the statistics are the often-ignored psychological effects of the violence on combatants and their families as well as on community members, most especially the children, caught in the crossfire.

We also see the environment being battered and damaged in the carnage. Bullets, grenades, bombs, mortars and other war tools obliterate wildlife, disturb native habitats and poison the air, water and soil with toxic chemicals. This damage to the environment is very costly and can persist for generations.

We deplore all forms of violence that only divide and impoverish our nation, harm our communities and the environment, and divert essential human and financial resources from constructive and beneficial purposes—such as building classrooms, producing instructional materials and increasing teachers' salaries, promoting primary health care, advancing zero-waste resource management and creating sustainable jobs and livelihood.

For the sake of the people and the environment, we call upon the government to stop the offensive. We support the call, made by faith and peace groups, for the cessation of violence in southern Philippines, and we appeal to the warring parties to opt for diplomacy and negotiation, and to shun violence as a means of addressing disputes.

—EILEEN SISON,
chair, EcoWaste Coalition,
Unit 320, Eagle Court,
26 Matalino St., Quezon City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS

Lafayette strictly observes RP laws

ROY A. CALFOFORO ASKED: "What is GMA going to do with Lafayette?" ("Greater threat to Nature," INQUIRER, 8/9/07)

Let me remind him that Lafayette met all the very strict environmental requirements of the Philippine Environmental Council. The company strictly adheres to all the restrictions and environmental codes imposed on it.

It has also financially helped Filipinos during natural calamities and continues to assist Filipinos in many ways—by providing financial support and jobs.

—DENISE CORBIN,
RO. Box 102 Nambour Qld.
Australia

Filipinos need man of action

I THINK RAMON TULFO HAS A point there about Sen. Richard Gordon being very much qualified to be the country's president. ("They forget about Dick Gordon," INQUIRER, 8/9/07)

When the Americans left Subic and Clark, my friends and I, new graduates from UP, were inspired by what he did for the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority and by how he pushed his constituents to move on their own. Quite a departure from typical "Pinoy" anxiety over the post-US bases scenario.

I believe the man is a "mover-shaker," and we need someone who can kick all of us into action.

—GRACE REYES,
glimreyes@gmail.com

Let's have more of angry Mayor Lim

I WOULD LIKE TO THANK NEAL Cruz for that piece of good news: If that is what happens when "Dirty Harry" gets angry, the more I want him to get angry. (INQUIRER, 8/15/07)

I want Mayor Alfredo Lim to get really angry in Divisoria, Tutuban, Juan Luna, Barrio Magsaysay, etc. In these parts of Manila, anarchy is at its worst. *Wala na yatang batas dito sa* Tondo (It seems there's no more law here in Tondo)—illegal sidewalk and road vendors, unruly pedicab drivers, double parking, illegal "permanent" structures, squatters, not to mention the underground syndicates, etc.

Vice Mayor Isko Moreno must likewise get angry and do his share in enforcing law and order.

Am I just making a wish that is next to impossible? I hope I am not.

—BERNARD NOLASCO,
b_nolasco@yahoo.com

On squatters' right to vote

THIS REFERS TO NEAL H. CRUZ'S "DON'T make 'Dirty Harry' angry." (INQUIRER, 8/15/07)

It is about time we amended our election laws in such a way that only the legitimate residents of local electoral districts are given the right to vote for their local officials; squatters may vote only for national officials.

This way local officials will stop coddling them.

—RAUL LORETO,
rauloreto@yahoo.com

P2B for veterans still up in the air

WITH PRIME COMMODITIES COSTING TWICE as much as they did in 2002, or five years ago, it is high time Congress increased the old-age pension of World War II veterans from P5,000 to P10,000 per month. Over the years, we contented ourselves with the meager amount though it was hardly enough to cover the exorbitant costs of our maintenance medicines.

We are, therefore, very glad to have in the Senate the young and dynamic Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV, a former Navy lieutenant, who is concerned with the welfare of his comrades-in-arms. The first bill he filed in the Senate seeks to increase the basic pay and allowances of AFP's rank and file. (INQUIRER, 7/9/07)

An increase in the monthly pension of World War II veterans is long overdue. Sec. 7, Article XVI of the 1987 Philippine Constitution mandates that, "The State will provide immediate and adequate care, benefits and other forms of assistance to war veterans and veterans of military campaigns and their surviving spouses and orphans." We do expect that the 14th Congress will give life to this constitutional provision before we, who are in the twilight years of our lives, close our eyes and travel to that "undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns."

We, World War II veterans whose number is thinning, would like to also request the good senator to work for the funding of RA 7696 which, under Sec. 10, provides that "Funds for the purpose of this Act shall be included in the annual general appropriation of the Department of National Defense and such funds required for the initial implementation of benefits adjusted or upgraded under this Act shall be taken from the available savings and funds of the National Government."

President Macapagal-Arroyo in her speeches during the Araw ng Kagitingan commemoration rites, held on May 6 of 2005 and 2006 in Mt. Samat, Bataan, promised to release a total of P2 billion to pay for the administrative disability of veterans, which has accumulated to more than P30 billion since RA 6948 was enacted on April 9, 1990. The law entitles every veteran and his spouse, upon reaching the age of 70 years P1,700 and P500, respectively, per month.

It seems that the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office has until now not received a single centavo of the P2 billion. We are already fed up with broken promises.

—GODOFREDO O. PETEZA JR.,
Veterans Federation of the Philippines,
Camarines Norte Veterans District-Region 5,
2651 J. Pimentel St.,
Daet, Camarines Norte

Unforgettable moment with Magsaysay awardee

I WILL FOREVER CHERISH THAT SINGLE moment I had in the past with former Senate President Jovito Salonga.

I write this as a way of congratulating him for being chosen this year's Magsaysay awardee for Government Service. This rare and prestigious title, which is given only to the most deserving individual, is equivalent to the Nobel Prize.

The year was 1959. The occasion, my graduation from the FEU Institute of Law. During the hooding ceremonies that preceded our graduation rites at the FEU quadrangle, Dean Jovito Salonga, taking a glance at my father who was behind me, asked: "Your father, Guillermo?"

I answered proudly: "Yes, sir."

As my father was assisting Dean Salonga in placing the hood on me, I silently broke into tears at the thought of having achieved my dream to be a lawyer and of that "personalized" attention given by my smiling beloved dean and role model not only to me but also to my loving father, who was himself misty-eyed.

—GUILLERMO R. VIOJAN,
201 Landcom Village,
Mindanao Avenue, Quezon City

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Old farming method still widely used in Samar

By Vicente S. Labro
Tacloban City

DESPITE GREAT ADVANCES IN agriculture, many farmers in Samar still use a crude farming method resulting in poor rice yield and low income.

Leo Cañeda, regional executive director of the Department of Agriculture, said he was surprised to learn that farmers in Northern Samar, particularly those in the rice-producing towns of Catubig and Las Navas, still rely on the "payatak" system of farming.

"I was astonished ... when I learned that the *payatak* system, which is already history, especially in Leyte, is still being practiced there," he added.

Under the *payatak* method, a farmer would line up and guide a group of carabaos (water buffalos) in trampling a rice plot until the soil becomes soggy and ready for planting rice seedlings. Before that, the field is first soaked in rainwater or water flowing from a nearby watershed to soften the soil for animal trampling.

This method, however, is laborious and results in very low rice yield compared to the harvests from irrigated rice fields. Nonetheless, *payatak* remains widely practiced by farmers in the three provinces on Samar Island.

"With the *payatak* system still widely used ... something has got to be done to turn the situation around," said Cañeda.

The opening two weeks ago of an agricultural research facility in Barangay Irawahan, Catubig will hopefully turn farmers away from the *payatak* practice, said Cañeda.

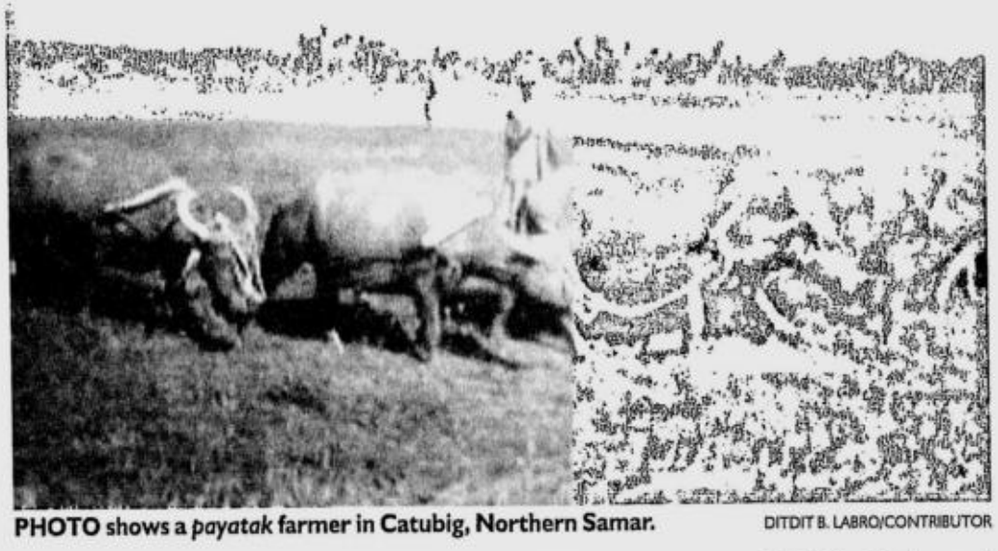

PHOTO shows a *payatak* farmer in Catubig, Northern Samar. DITDIT B. LABRO/CONTRIBUTOR

The research facility, which was rehabilitated at a cost of P5.3 million, is a project of the Help for Catubig Agricultural Advancement Project (HCAAP).

HCAAP is a government rural development project funded through a loan from the Japan Bank for International Cooperation. It was started in June 2002 and is expected to be completed in July 2009.

With funding of over P2.4 billion, the HCAAP covers more than 70 barangays of the municipalities of Las Navas and Catubig in the so-called Catubig Valley.

The project is being implemented by the DA, National Irrigation Administration (NIA), Department of Public Works and Highways, Department of Health, and the local governments of Northern Samar, Catubig and Las Navas.

HCAAP seeks to increase farm production in Northern Samar through the putting up of irrigation facilities, flood protection and extension of road network. It also aims to increase the farmers' earnings by developing agricultural support services and institution; enhance public health through schistosomiasis control; and provide basic social services in the covered villages.

Irrigation and drainage projects totaling P994.39 million are now being implemented in the HCAAP area through the NIA, according to a report from the National Economic and Development Authority in Eastern Visayas (Neda 8).

As for farm support services, Cañeda said the DA has been allotted P32 million for the rehabilitation of the farmers' training facility and for the establishment of pilot demonstration farms in Catubig and Las Navas towns "to showcase the latest breakthroughs especially on rice farming technologies."

HCAAP envisions that upon completion of the project, a total of 4,500 hectares should have been irrigated with 80 to 90 percent of the farmers adopting the latest technologies especially in rice farming, Cañeda said.

With HCAAP, Samar farmers would be weaned of *payatak* and no longer be contended with just producing 32 cavans of *palay* per hectare.

Since the introduction of the project, Caneda said a number of rice farmers on Samar Island have increased their yield to 50 cavans per hectare. DA hopes this will increase to 70 to 80 cavans per hectare upon the completion of the project in 2009.

"This is why we are very keen on implementing our hybrid rice commercialization project in that part of the province, and also we are keen on introducing at least for now the adoption of certified seeds so that we can increase the yield of our farmers there," he said.

As a poverty alleviation project, HCAAP could help the country in attaining its commitment to the United Nations' millennium development goals to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, curve schistosomiasis incidence, and provide safe water supply and basic sanitation, among others, by 2015.

Ilonggo fashion, poetry at the Antillan House

By Hazel P. Villa
Iloilo City

SASHAYING TO THE LIVE RENDITIONS OF OLD ILONGGO FAvorites like Pinalangga (Beloved) and the more current Handumanan (Remembrance), models made their entrance up the burnished narra stairs, glided through antique rooms, and preened before an audience seated atelier-style on a balmy evening at the Sanson y Montinola Antillan House in E. Lopez Street, Jaro District, Iloilo City.

The Antillan House itself, one of the very few left intact in the country, was like a debutante dressed for a grand ball—its trademark yakal rooftop carved decors were restored and repainted, shuttered windows were cleaned, and the exterior was painted a more cheerful mocha and pastel blue even as the brick foundations were spruced.

It was not only because the Iloilo Heritage Gala was held at the Antillan House in May that Greg Sanson, the owner, decided to glam up his family's turn-of-the-century ancestral home but also because heritage-conscious Ilonggos have once more revved up the advocacy machine calling for the preservation of Iloilo City's heritage houses and buildings.

THE NEWLY restored Antillan House of the Sanson-Montinola family lies resplendent at Jaro District leading to downtown Iloilo City. HAZEL P. VILLA

The Gala was but one of the activities of the 15 members that the Iloilo City Cultural Heritage Conservation Council (ICCHCC) spearheaded during the celebration of the National Heritage Month in May.

The ICCHCC has architect Antonio Sangrador as chair representing the private sector while Noel Hechanova, its director, represents the government.

"We must promote responsible appreciation of our culture. To preserve, we have to unite and beyond that, make people conscious of our heritage," Bambi Harper, National Heritage Festival director, had said.

For their "exemplary act of ongoing preservation and stewardship," the Iloilo City government recently awarded plaques of appreciation to the owners or managers of the following heritage buildings: Sanson Y Montinola Antillan House, Zafiro Ledesma Residence, Casa Mariquit of the Lopezes, Nelly Garden, Montinola Residence, Marquez Lim Residence of former Sen. Nikki Coseteng, and the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. in J.M. Basa Street.

Fashion, music, poetry

Soon after cocktails, the guests numbering about a hundred, with some dressed in formal wear, entered the Antillan House for a night of Ilonggo fashion, music and poetry—effectively setting an ambiance of greater appreciation for things uniquely Ilonggo.

The fashion show topbilled by Ilonggo designers Don Protasio, Bo Parcon, Angelette Borja-Ragus and Jaki Peñalosa of the Designers Guild of Iloilo started with two actors from the University of San Agustin Little Theater delivering excerpts from "Kawayan," a poem by eminent Ilongga writer and poet Magdalena Jalandoni.

Tingug (Voice), a young vocal ensemble formed in August 2006 under the directorship of Gerardo Muyuela set the mood for young designer Don Protasio's collection with their rendition of the upbeat but distinctly Hiligaynon performance of Benny Castillon's Kruhay!

Though the fashion show's motif was bamboo, avant-garde Protasio's collection had models wearing mostly billowy black or gold dresses and blouses "as inspired by dark clouds, leaves and wind" for "dark romance" with bits and pieces of bamboo on the models as accessories.

Apropos with Bo Parcon whose collection was made distinctive by a rugged, earthy look with tiny bamboo pieces forming squares and rectangles in his creations as "inspired by windows" or with bamboo acting as embellishments on what could have been run-of-the-mill creations.

Bamboo gown, anyone?

Women designers Angelete Borja-Ragus and Jaki Penalosa hewed more to the bamboo fashion motif as they pleasantly surprised the audience with their ingenuity and innovations with bamboo and indigenous fabric.

Penalosa redefined the Philippine terno by marrying indigenous fabric such as *hablon* and raffia with contemporary designs with bamboo bits and pieces incorporated into either the beadwork of the gowns or into the shawls.

Borja-Ragus had a model wear a bustier made of geometrically arranged bamboo and one wore a cocktail dress with bamboo "tapestry."

And as if that wasn't remarkable enough, another model came in wearing a skirt made of curled bamboo for that billowy look which you never thought was possible with such a hard material as bamboo.

Applause followed a model wearing a Borja-Ragus ball gown with bamboo shavings as embellishments on the gown itself, complemented by an intricate but elegant hairpiece made of bamboo shavings too.

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Listens to African music. Collects toy figures. Walks the greyhound. Coaches a cricket team every weekend. Retreats to a yoga hideaway Dream is not a dream Accompanies grandma to watch World Cup final Enjoys Japanese cartoon Organizes beach clear up. Climbs Mt. Everest Wears an Alba.

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Visayas, Mindanao seen rice sources

MAGSAYSAY, DAVAO del Sur—The Department of Agriculture (DA) has turned to farmers in the Visayas and Mindanao to cushion the impact of the drought and floods that had wreaked havoc on farms in Luzon.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said Thursday that unless the government moved quickly, there would be a shortage of rice because of the dry spell and flooding in some areas of the country.

Data from the DA indicated that the dry spell in Luzon would translate to a shortfall of about 300,000 metric tons of palay.

Larger shortage

The DA data also indicated that had the dry spell lingered longer, the shortfall could increase up to nine million metric tons.

Yap said only early planting among Visayas and Mindanao farmers could help address the impending shortfall.

"We need to help the farmers in Luzon that's why I am now in Mindanao," he said during Thursday's launching of the "Quick Turn Around" (QTA) program here.

Under the program, farmers are encouraged to plant one month ahead of the normal planting season so they could also harvest earlier.

Early birds

Yap said harvesting early would ensure continuous production and ample supply of the grain.

He said the DA will assist farmers in addressing the potentials of disease affecting their rice fields because of the early planting.

He said one of these is by encouraging them to use 3rd crop (RC10) varieties, which the DA would supply.

He said aside from giving out the seeds, the DA would also help farmers in the marketing aspect.

Yap said farmers should plant by Sept. 15 so harvest could take place in December.

Farmers here usually plant in October.

Added income

He said aside from ensuring that there would be enough rice supply, early planting would also help farmers increase their income.

Ernesto Miro, provincial agriculturist, admitted that farmers of this town were hesitant about joining the QTA program thinking that it would be difficult for them to shift to a new schedule from their usual planting season.

But after Yap held a dialogue with them, Miro said the farmers understood why early planting was important.

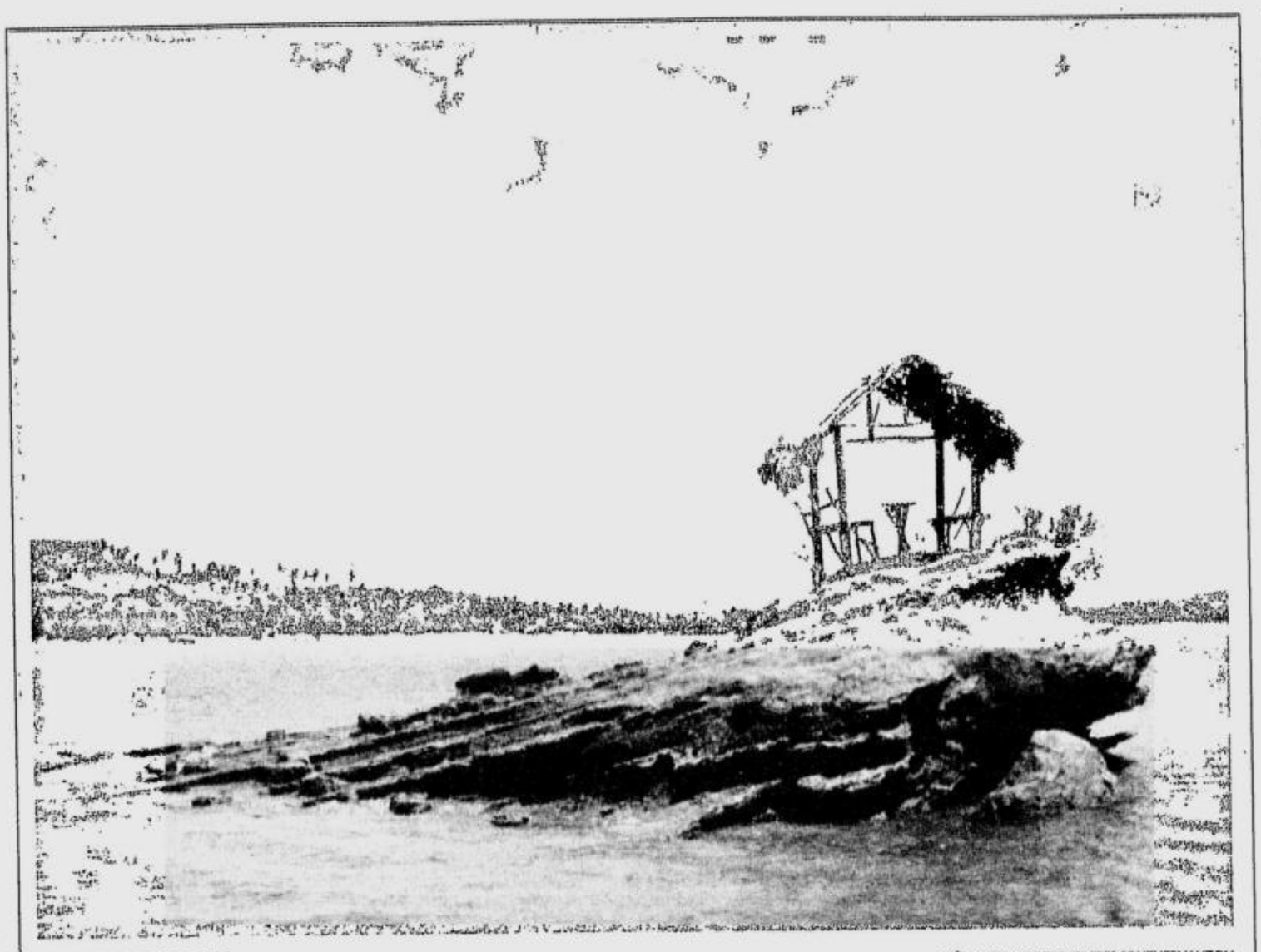
New facility

In Malungon in Sarangani province, Yap said he was upbeat about increasing the yield of corn farmers with the inauguration Thursday of the P27-million post-harvest facility funded by the government.

"Without this facility, we could hardly encourage our corn farmers to produce more. Who would endeavor to increase their production if in the end their produce would just rot?" Yap said.

The construction of the post-harvest facility was part of the government national corn program.

Similar facilities were also constructed in Kabacan, North Cotabato and in Banga in South Cotabato. *Orlando B. Dinoy and Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao*



RESTING PLACE NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

An islet a few meters from shore serves as a resting place for fishermen and residents of Barangay San Antonio in Malilipot, Albay.

East Visayas fish production on the rise

By Vicente S. Labro
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—FISH PRODUCTION in Eastern Visayas continues to rise as more people are now engaged in fishpond and fish cage operations, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources regional office here said.

The National Statistical Coordinating Board (NSCB) reported that the region produced 61,053 metric tons of fish from April to June, up by 31 percent from the previous quarter.

NSCB statistics also showed that fish production in the first six months this year, totaling 107,616 MT, was higher than the 92,320 MT produced by the region in the first half of 2006.

Justerie Granali, BFAR assistant regional director, attributed the continuing growth of the fishery sector here to the growing number of marine agriculture (mariculture) zone operators and of those engaged in fishpond operations.

Mariculture posted a fish production of 12,682 MT in the second quarter of this year, or more than 100 percent higher than the 6,036 MT produced during the January-March period.

Fishpond operators

Most fishpond operators raise *bangus* (milkfish) and *tilapia*, she said.

Granali said the region has 14 mariculture parks in Biliran, Calbayog City, the towns of Babatngon and Merida in Leyte, Quinapondan in Eastern Samar, and in Sta. Rita and Basey in Samar, among other sites.

A mariculture park, which operates like an industrial estate, is being developed by the local government unit in coordination with the BFAR here to provide investors an area where they can raise fish, such as *bangus*, in cages.

Granali said there was also a rise in seawater fish catch, which she attributed to effective coastal resource management practiced in the towns.

JI-linked extortion gang targets Dutch trader

KORONADAL CITY—AFTER ITS failed attempt to extort money despite destroying several buses of the Yellow Bus Lines Co. (YBL), an extortion gang linked to the Jemaah Islamiyah has turned to a Dutch national living in Polomolok, South Cotabato to raise cash.

Supt. Raul Supiter, Polomolok police chief, said on Friday that the gang had threatened to kidnap Allen Van Teeseling and his son, David, unless he coughs up P2.5 million.

Supiter said Teeseling, 42, and his son, 15, have been living in the country for the past seven years already.

The Teeselings maintain farms in Polomolok and Sto. Niño towns.

Supiter said the Al-Khobar Gang first sent the demand and the threat through a text message to David's cell phone.

The text said that the Teeselings will be kidnapped if they failed to pay up, Supiter said.

Teeseling ignored the text message, according to Supiter.

On Thursday, Supiter said a certain Jamil phoned Teeseling and repeated the demand.

Jamil, Supiter said, also told Teeseling he and his son would be harmed. *Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

Confessed assassin tags ex-mayor as mastermind

By Tina G. Santos

A CONFESSED HIIRED KILLER who surrendered to the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) has pointed to a former municipal mayor of Agusan del Sur as the mastermind in several unsolved killings in the province.

Elmo Numancia, 42, of Purok 1, Barangay Salvacion, Trento, Agusan del Sur, yesterday named former Trento Mayor Escolastico Hitgano Sr. as the one behind the death of at least five people, all reportedly supporters of Hitgano's political rivals.

Numancia told the NBI that of the five victims, he killed Jun Fuentes and Islaw Llames, upon the orders of Hitgano.

Confession

"Mayor Hitgano ordered me to kill Fuentes, an escaped detainee, sometime in 1992 because he said he was a threat to our town's peace and order," Numancia told reporters.

He added that he killed Llames, a known staunch supporter of Hitgano's political rival, in 1995.

The three other victims—Alex Apura and Tony Saraza, both killed in 1998, and Rommel Sarabia, who was killed on May 20—were killed by Hitgano's other hired killers, Numancia said, adding that the former mayor has at least seven hit men.

P5,000 for a life

Numancia said he was paid by Hitgano a minimum of P5,000 "depending on who to kill."

He said he decided to come out in the open because Hitgano allegedly wanted him dead. He said he was ambushed but survived the attack sometime in June.

"He (Hitgano) wanted to silence me," Numancia said, adding that he earned the ire of Hitgano after he refused to obey his order to kill Sarabia.

"I did not obey him so he asked another hit man to do it," Numancia added.

Oscar Embido, NBI assistant regional director and chief of the anti-organized crime division, said they were still studying if Numancia could become a state witness.

Embido said the NBI already issued a subpoena for Hitgano to appear at the NBI.

Rains helped save rivers in Cordillera

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—AN aggressive watershed protection program is still the most practical and environment friendly approach to protect the provinces from a prolonged dry spell, the Cordillera's top irrigation official said.

Abraham Akilit, the region's National Irrigation Administration (NIA) director, told reporters here on Thursday that a watershed-based irrigation system would save rain-dependent farms from the drought.

Savior rains

He said the Cordillera, which is still 30 percent short of fully irrigating 185,408 hectares of agricultural lands, almost faced a "potentially dangerous water lack scenario" had not the rains poured continuously recently.

He said the drought "mildly affected" the region in terms of farms that had been dried up but the river systems bear evidence of the more severe results.

Trees, not cloud seeding

June and July's dry spell, Akilit said, already sucked the water out of 2,585 hectares of farmlands in the region and NIA was afraid the areas hit would reach a maximum of 8,311 hectares if the dry spell continued.

Akilit said a well planned watershed program would enhance irrigation schedules and maintain water levels of the region's four major river systems—Agno, Chico, Abra and Magat.

The rivers are considered "endangered," with Agno and Chico tagged as within "critical status."

"Add the effects of dry spell to the rivers' present status and you could just imagine the effect on the national mandate of fast tracking irrigation systems," Akilit said.

Provincial irrigation officials thanked tropical storms "Chedeng" and "Dodong" and Typhoon "Egay" for the surge in water levels of small rivers supplying irrigation to various farms in the Cordillera.

Dangerous levels

They said the water discharges dropped to as low as 50 percent, pushing irrigation and agriculture officials to scramble for rain-inducing measures.

Delfin Aglit, Mt. Province irrigation chief, said the Chico River managed to discharge only 7 cubic meters per second of water in May this year, compared to its discharge of 13 cubic meters per second in May last year.

Benguet's three rivers—Agno, Amburayan and Bued—suffered the same fate, said Ronald Cervantes, the province's irrigation officer.

Drops in the bucket

In June last year, the three rivers' average water discharge was 13,044 liters per second but this was down to 8,600 liters per second this year.

The average water discharge in July last year was 25,073 liters per second, compared to only 10,768 liters per second this year, Cervantes said.

Farm areas hit by the drought in Apayao, Kalinga, Ifugao, Benguet and Mt. Province reached close to 1,000 hectares, irrigation officials said. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

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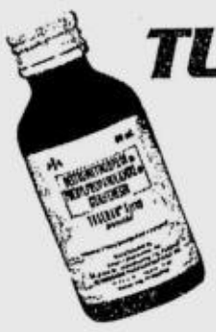

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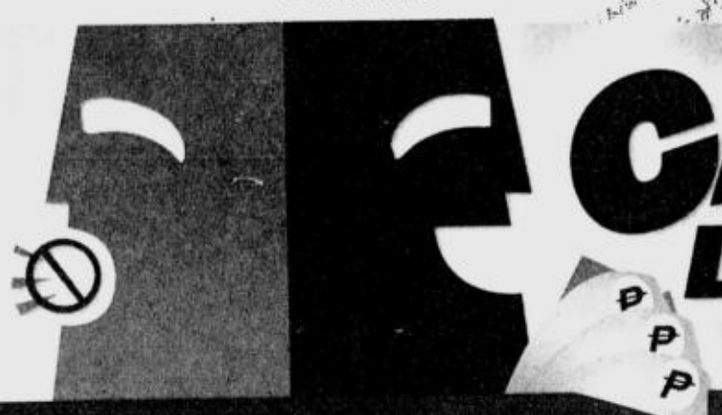

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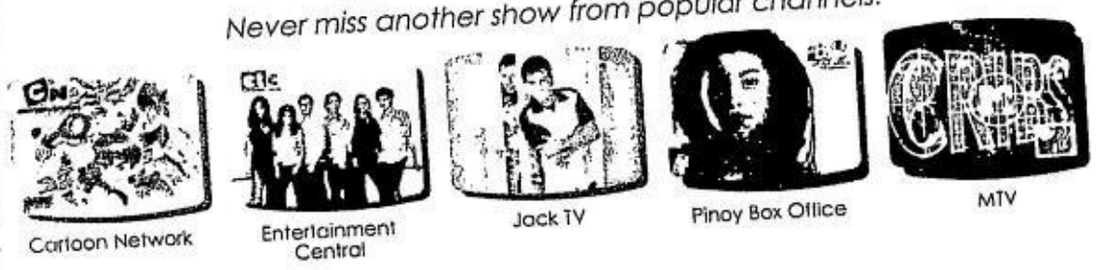

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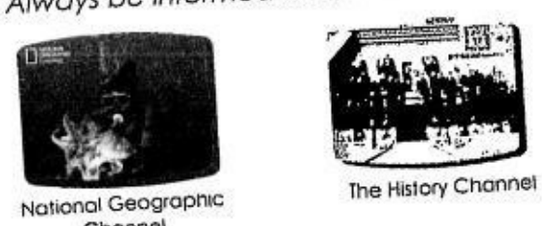

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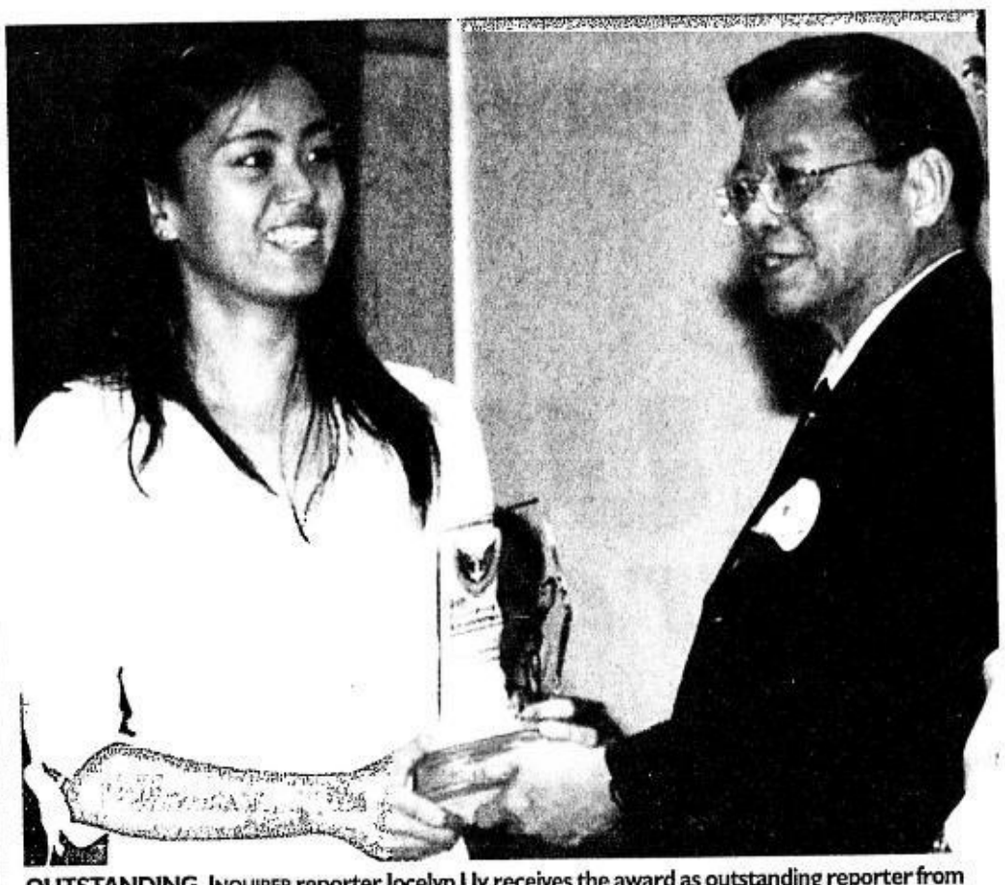

OUTSTANDING. INQUIRER reporter Jocelyn Uy receives the award as outstanding reporter from Chief Justice Reynato Puno given yearly by the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption. JOAN BONDOC

Inquirer reporters, photog bag awards

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER YESTERDAY won two top prizes in the 4th Lasallian Scholarum Awards, presented by the De La Salle University-Manila to honor "impressive reportage" on issues concerning the youth and education sectors.

The story, "Law grad gives new meaning to 'Aeta,'" by INQUIRER Pampanga correspondent Tonette Orejas, received the outstanding feature award while the photograph, "Life in the evacuation" by INQUIRER photographer Edwin Bacasmas, clinched the outstanding photograph award.

The anticrime group, Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption, also picked INQUIRER reporter Jocelyn Uy as its outstanding reporter for 2007 during the organization's 9th founding anniversary rites at Camp Crame yesterday.

Orejas' story was about the life of Wyda Cosme, the first Aeta law graduate. She finished the course in the face of abject poverty and the disastrous effects on the ethnic minority wrought by Mt. Pinatubo's eruptions in 1991.

Bacasmas' photo showed children who lived in an evacuation center in Bicol reading a book by the flicker of a gas lamp.

Orejas and Bacasmas each received a glass trophy sculpted by Ramon Orlina and P25,000.

For capturing this year's theme of "Get the lead(ears') story," GMA 7 reporter Kara David's "Mga Batang Hiram (Borrowed children)" was hailed as the outstanding feature on television.

Nestor Cuartero of the Manila Bulletin bested six finalists for his story, "A bridge for kids," and was chosen the outstanding feature on DLSU-Manila.

The La Sallian's "The plagiarism plague" garnered the outstanding feature award for a school organ.

Entries from five INQUIRER correspondents and columnists became finalists in the outstanding feature category. These were: "Vendor by day, teacher by night" by Julie Alipala, "Japanese youth learn Pinoy family values" by Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, "Teachers and students" by Ambeth Ocampo, "Hope education" by Randy David and "The Mangyans of Mindoro" by Augusto Villalon.

Bro. Armin Luistro, FSC, DLSU-Manila president, described all winning entries, selected from more than 300 works as "moving, inspiring and real."

The Lasallian Scholarum Awards also encourage media practitioners to help the public increase its awareness of youth and education issues, said Dr. Carmelita Quebengco, DLSU-Manila chancellor. *Inquirer Central Luzon*

THE BEST: INQUIRER Central Luzon correspondent Tonette Orejas holds trophy for best feature story for print during the 2007 Lasallian Scholarum Awards at The Peninsula in Makati. ERIK ARAZAS

Detained general sets conditions for amnesty

By Christian V. Esguerra

AN ARMY OFFICER DETAINED FOR allegedly plotting to oust President Macapagal-Arroyo in February 2006 may consider amnesty, but only after issues like the "Hello Garci" election fraud scandal had been resolved.

Interviewed through his lawyer, Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim said the "all-encompassing amnesty" floated by Speaker Jose de Venecia should be a mere part of a broader effort to address "deep-seated problems."

A former commander of the elite Scout Rangers, Lim said these problems included Ms Arroyo's alleged cheating in the 2004 presidential election, the alleged involvement of some military officials in poll fraud, and the extrajudicial killings.

"Amnesty won't mean anything if we don't get to the bottom of these problems," he told the INQUIRER. "If the government is serious about it, it should make us a part of the solution to these deep-seated problems."

Lim is under court-martial for involvement in the coup plot—an allegation he has consistently denied. He is being held at Camp Capinpin in Tanay, Rizal, with Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda, a former Marine commandant.

'Bigger peace process'

For Miranda, there should first be an explanation of "what this amnesty is all about."

The discussion should focus on a type of amnesty comprising "a portion of a bigger peace process," he said through Lim's lawyer, Vicente Verdadero.

Miranda delivered in January 2006 a "no-holds-barred" speech on the political situation, and is also under court-martial for involvement in the supposed plot. His audience then included top military and police officials gathered at Camp Aguinaldo.

According to Miranda, issues like the "Hello Garci" scandal and the extrajudicial killings are helping trigger discontent among officers and soldiers—an attitude, he said, that did not necessarily translate to coup plots.

Lim said the allegation that some top Armed Forces officials were involved in election manipulation in 2004 had helped create the impression that the military institution was "no longer a source of pride."

"It seems that it's been bastardized," he said.

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METROBRIEFS

Pasig rerouting scheme

THE PASIG government will ban public utility jeepneys in the streets leading to the city's public market as part of the rerouting scheme to be implemented starting Aug. 20 to decongest the area. Under the scheme, streets around the public market's perimeter will be closed to counterflow traffic. PUJs have been assigned specific routes according to their destinations. Tricycles coming from U. Velasco Avenue going to the public market must make a right turn to Market Ave. Pasig City Traffic and Parking Management Office Chief Police Supt. Virgilio Fulache said the new routes were assigned after consultations with the transport sector and a study made by the city government. *Kristine L. Alave*

Paco anniversary Mass

THE ARCHBISHOP of Manila, Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, will lead the Eucharistic celebration marking the 408th anniversary of the San Fernando de Dilao Parish in Paco, Manila and the feast of its patron, Our Lord of the Holy Sepulchre, at 7 a.m. tomorrow. Concelebrants are Paco parish priest Msgr. Domingo A. Cirilos Jr., assistant parish priest Fr. Wilfredo C. Talavera, Fr. Celso R. Alcantara, Fr. Eduardo Ulloa, Fr. Macario Sortido, Fr. Luke Moortgat and Fr. Ariel Jesus O. Oguan with Rev. Bartolome Pullon Jr., assistant minister.

Pateros declares state of calamity

Minor landslide in San Mateo town

By Julie M. Aurelio, Kristine L. Alave and Allison W. Lopez

THE TOWN OF PATEROS HAS BEEN PLACED UNDER A STATE OF calamity as six of its 10 barangays have remained flooded since Aug. 8 when typhoon "Chedeng" hit the country.

Town Mayor Jaime Medina issued the order yesterday when another typhoon, "Egay," brought more rains to Metro Manila.

"Egay" dumped heavy rains in Metro Manila and surrounding towns since Wednesday, leading to massive flooding and forcing authorities to suspend classes and close government offices.

"There are no more floods on the main streets, but water remains at knee level inside houses," Medina told the INQUIRER.

Medina ordered barangay captains to use the calamity fund in the barangay budget for contingency expenses.

Hardest hit by floodwaters was Barangay Sta. Ana which is near a creek. The other affected barangays are Martires, Aguho, San Roque, Sto. Rosario Silangan and Sto. Rosario Kaliwa.

A disaster response team was created to identify evacuation sites. Although residents have yet to be evacuated to higher ground, Medina said they were eyeing barangay halls, daycare centers and public schools as temporary shelters. "Thankfully, there was no reported outbreak of diseases," he added.

In nearby Taguig City, floodwaters at knee to waist levels were reported in Barangays Tuktukan, Sta. Ana, Calzada Tipas, Napindan, Bambang, Wawa, Lower Bicutan, Maharlika and North Daang Hari.

Meanwhile, the Pasay City Rescue unit reported chest-high floodwaters as of 3 p.m. yesterday in Barangays 180, 185, 177 and 181 in Maricaban.

Villamor Airbase, where floodwaters reportedly reached waist level, was also closely monitored.

In Muntinlupa City, slight flooding was reported in Sitio Masagana and San Jose Subdivision in Barangay Alabang and Hillsboro Subdivision in Barangay Cupang along the South Luzon Expressway. Other flooded areas were Lakeview 2 in Barangay Putatan and Regalas Compound in Barangay Tunasan.

Yesterday afternoon, officials of San Mateo town in Rizal province evacuated 13 families in Barangay Silangan because of a minor landslide. No casualties were reported in the incident. The families were brought to an abandoned house 150 meters from the affected area.

Local officials were also monitoring the towns of Cainta, Angono, Binangonan and Teresa, also in Rizal, for flashfloods. The towns are close to the San Mateo River.

In Mandaluyong City, Mayor Benhur Abalos asked the Metro Manila Development Authority to remove trash clogging ditches and creeks. Cleanup efforts were concentrated on the perennially flooded Maysilo Circle, site of City Hall.

MMDA chair Bayani Fernando blamed the garbage for the clogged drainage that allowed floodwaters to rise quickly.

Manila city engineer Armand Andres said Metro residents should stop littering and clogging sewers with garbage if they wanted to stop the flooding.

The Supreme Court, in a ruling the other day, said local government units were responsible for flood control as part of the basic services they should provide to constituents.

Andres admitted that LGUs, through their flood-control units, were duty-bound to check regularly drainage systems, but he said the clearing of sewers and pumping stations was the job of the MMDA.

The city engineer said the recent dismantling of an informal settlers' community in Quiapo made only a "small dent" in the bigger problem of creekside squatters.

SLIPPING AND SLIDING Children of Sitio Aratelis in Masville Village, Sucat, Parañaque City find simple joy sliding down this street each time the rains come. On rain-less days, the small community gets rationed water for their everyday needs. Aratelis is not serviced by conventional water lines and relies on water delivery trucks for its daily supply.

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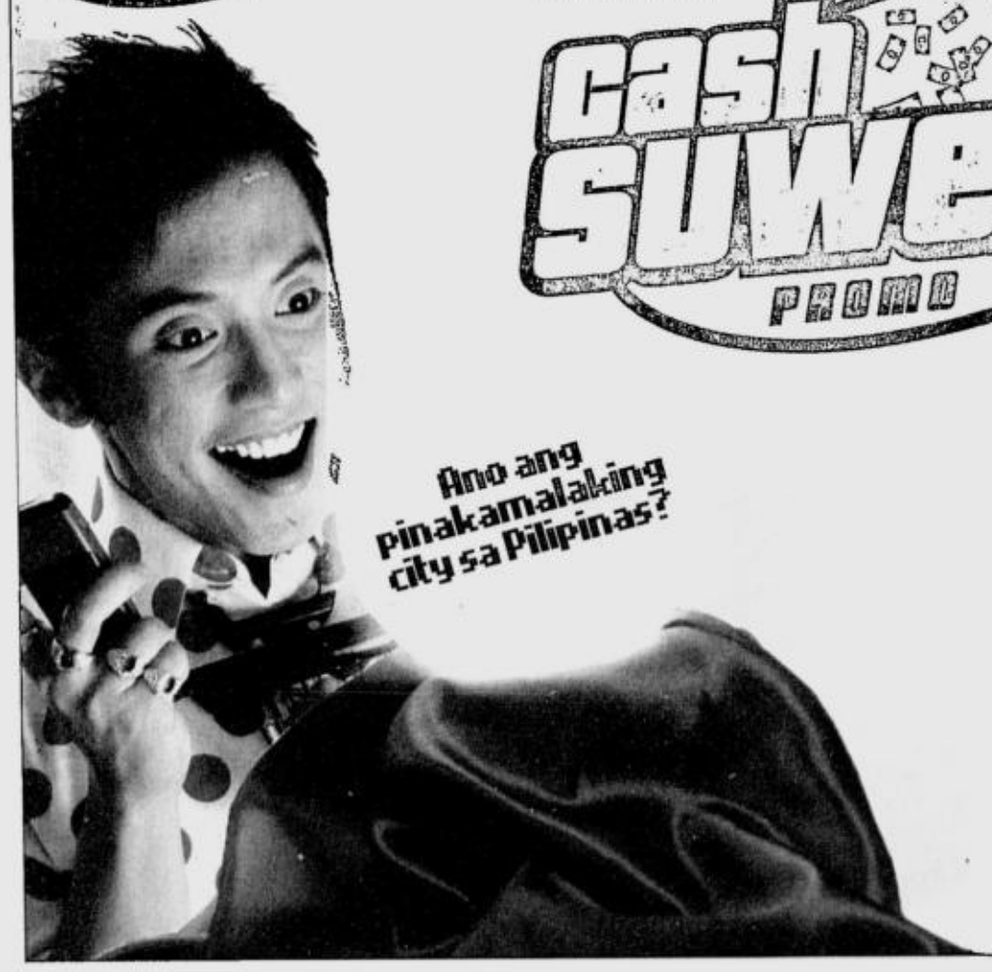

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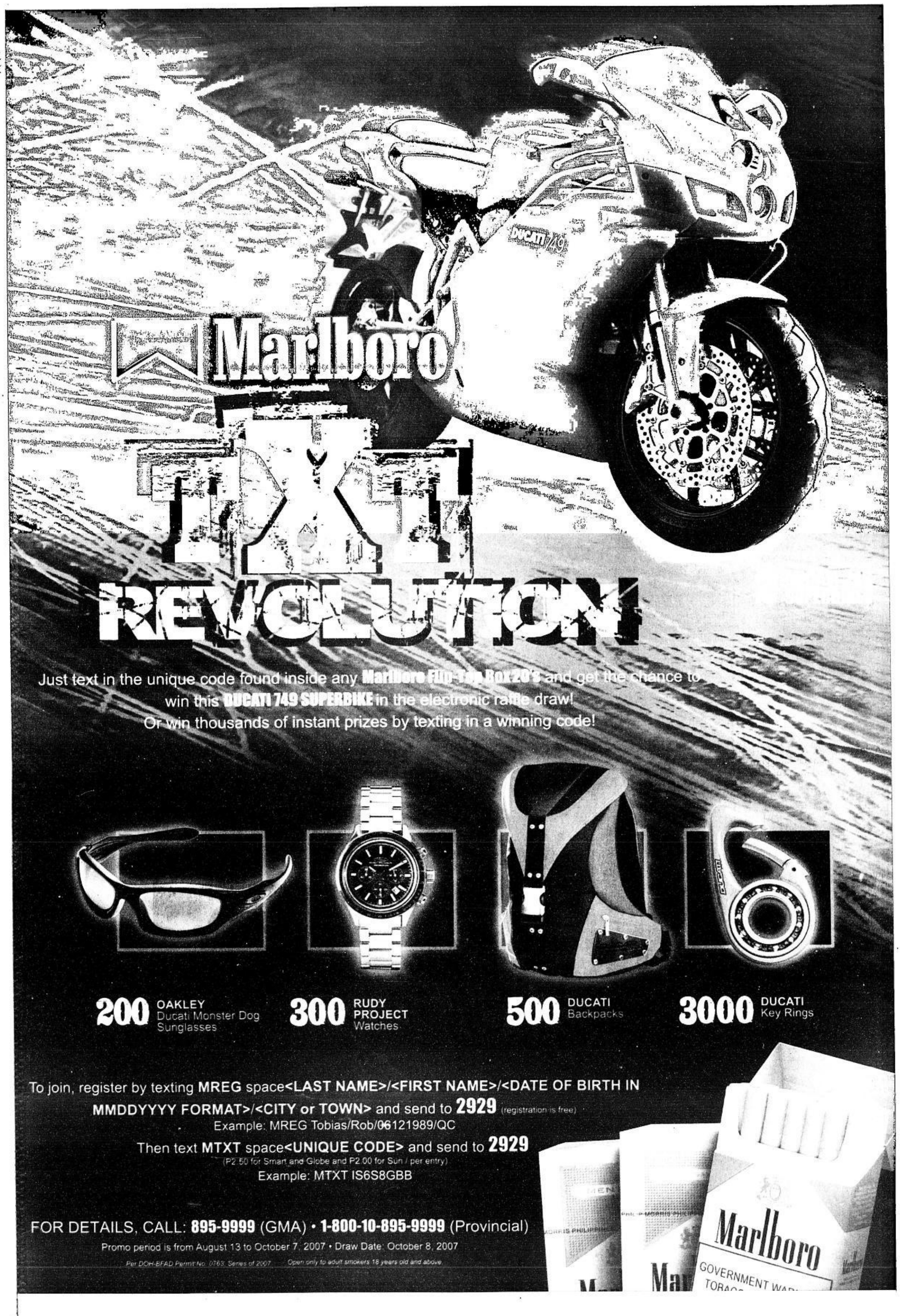

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Noli, wife face bigamy, falsification of documents raps

By Jeannette I. Andrade and Cynthia D. Balana

THEY LAST SAW THEIR MOTher boarding a tricycle to leave Calamba, Laguna in 1979.

Twenty-eight years later, brothers Jhoveenel Ombus and Arjurie Omar Sinsuat Olor filed several charges against the woman they call their mother, including bigamy, in the Quezon City regional trial court on Thursday. Their mother is now the wife of Vice President Noli de Castro, also a respondent in the case.

Asked to comment on the charges, De Castro said yesterday these were politically motivated.

Jhoveneel, now 34, told the INQUIRER they would not have gone to court if Arlene Sinsuat de Castro acknowledged they were her sons. "I was 6-years-old and my brother was five when my mother left us. That was my last memory of her and she never looked back," he said

Jhoveneel said he and his brother went to ABS-CBN, where Arlene was then broadcast executive, to talk to her after seeing her name on television. They were allegedly prevented from seeing her by Arlene's brother, Allan, who reportedly threatened to harm them if they revealed their relationship to Arlene.

"We tried to reach her for several years after that but she refused to speak to us and did not even acknowledge that we existed. This is our last recourse," Jhoveneel said, referring to the charges of bigamy, falsification of public documents, perjury, threats and obstruction of justice against the De Castros. "We are not doing this for any financial consideration. We should not be punished for being her children," Jhoveneel added.

He said they rebuffed offers from politicians wanting to use them against the vice president. "We have nothing against Noli but he cannot be separated from this complaint being the current husband of our mother," he said.

The Olor brothers claimed the De Castros were married on July 16, 1991, although Arlene's alleged previous marriage on Nov. 17, 1971 to Juanito Olor, their father, had not been "lawfully" dissolved. The brothers also accused the vice president of perjury when he allegedly stated on his marriage certificate that he was of the Islamic faith when "he is known nationwide as a Catholic and a devotee of the Black Nazarene in Quiapo."

De Castro, on the other hand, said the move was a demolition job and that he intended to answer the charges in court.

Crushing of cars at Subic just a circus

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE CRUSHING OF 18 smuggled cars at the Subic Freeport was just for show, a circus.

Many were either shells of unused cars or were no longer in running condition, according to my sources at the Bureau of Customs.

If the government was really set in putting a stop to the smuggling of luxury vehicles, it shouldn't have spared the cars in excellent condition like the Lamborghini, Porsche Cayenne, BMW and 14 other luxury cars.

***

Why were the Lamborghini, Porsche Cayenne, BMW and the 14 other luxury cars spared from destruction?

The reason given was that they were the subjects of litigation as the owners had filed cases against the government so they could recover the cars.

That's a lie, according to my customs sources. The real reason is that some of those cars were imported by persons very close to the powers that be.

***

The government is giving too much attention to the smuggling of luxury cars at the Subic Freeport, and looking the other way in other ports.

The Port of Irene in Cagayan province and the Cebu port are other points where luxury cars are allegedly smuggled.

A close relative of a powerful politician is reportedly behind the smuggling of cars in one of the ports mentioned.

***

The graft case against former Transportation and Communication Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez is persecution, not prosecution.

The case stemmed from the construction of Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in 1996.

Alvarez and his co-accused allegedly entered into a contract with the Philippine International Air Terminal Co. Inc. "grossly disadvantageous to the government."

But Alvarez did not approve the contract. He was the chair of the Technical Working Committee that recommended the participation of Piatco in building Naia 3 to the Bids and Awards Committee.

There's a whale of a difference between approving and recommending.

***

Buoyed by the quick response of the Housing Land Use Regulatory Board to the item in this corner, lot owners in a multimillion-peso residential resort in San Mateo, Rizal, have furnished me a letter from officials of a well-known land developer where the firm promised to build "amenities" for them as early as 2004.

In a letter signed by two sales officers, the firm said the residential estate's "amenities are a clubhouse, swimming pool, picnic grounds, nature park and playgrounds, ornamental gardens, concrete roadways ... (sic)"

The developer allegedly has not built a single amenity it promised.

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Let us revive people power in the most effective way by joining hands together in prayer at the Rizal Park (Luneta) this Saturday, August 18, 2007 at 8:00 AM till August 19, 2007, Sunday, 6:00AM to save our country from incessant natural and self inflicted calamities.

We appeal to everyone to set aside all kinds of political, religious, and social biases and or ideologies and come join us for the common good. It is time to unite to save our country from further calamities and troubles.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Display of strength

Russia, China, 4 Central Asia nations in unprecedented joint military exercise

CHEBARKUL, RUSSIA—THE PRESIDENTS of Russia, China and four other Central Asian states attended unprecedented joint military exercises on Friday, intended as a display of strength before the Western world.

The vast show of firepower at a training ground in the Russian province of Chelyabinsk near the Kazakh border was the culmination of a nine-day exercise dubbed "Peace Mission 2007" that began in northwest China.

It involved some 6,000 personnel from the six countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO): China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

A lone bugle player formally opened the exercises and helicopters, fighter jets and ground forces began using mock munitions to pound some 1,000 "terrorists" who had taken over a village fabricated for the exercises.

While Russia footed most of the bill for its phase of the exercises, spending some $80 million (60 million euros), they marked a new level of military cooperation with China after the two countries held their first-ever joint maneuvers two years ago.

Beijing contributed 1,700 personnel and has sent war planes and helicopters to the Chebarkul training ground in the rolling Urals countryside.

The SCO grew out of a regional effort in the mid-1990s to reduce military forces along common borders and has evolved into military and economic cooperation, with the focus on Central Asia.

A glistening podium had been set up for the presidents overlooking the mock village at the center of the assault, from which surviving "insurgents" were later to try to flee across a hypothetical national border.

The exercises come after SCO leaders underlined their common opposition to perceived US hegemony at a summit on Thursday in the ex-Soviet Central Asian state of Kyrgyzstan, with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad also present as an observer.

Russian media have highlighted the exercises' resemblance to an uprising in the Central Asian state of Uzbekistan in 2005, when Uzbek security forces' heavy-handed response was criticized by the West and human rights campaigners alleged that hundreds of civilians had been killed.

Putin rallied to Uzbekistan's side on that occasion and has likened US moves to foster democracy in Central Asia to "a bull in a china shop."

China meanwhile still views Central Asia's Fergana Valley as "virtually the main breeding ground for instability in the region," commented Russia's Kommersant newspaper on Thursday.

Beijing also remains preoccupied by Muslim separatists from its northwestern region of Xinjiang, China's ambassador to Moscow has said.

For Moscow the exercises were also a chance to show off to the visiting leaders the military hardware that is an important export sector for the Russian economy.

A display of helicopters, tanks, rocket launchers and machine guns was ready for the leaders' inspection.

But while real live villages nearby were benefiting in the form of newly paved roads and newly painted fences, the show of military might was not universally welcomed.

In New York, Human Rights Watch criticized the SCO, saying that "governments in the region have used overbroad definitions of extremist to silence peaceful dissent." And in Russia an activist for the mainly Muslim Tatar minority that has ancient roots in the Urals region, Fauziya Bairamova, said the exercises were designed to "frighten" local people. *AFP*

A CROSS bearing Christ still manages to stand amid the rubble at the Virgen del Socorro Church in Ica a day after a massive 7.9-magnitude earthquake rocked Peru on Aug. 15. AFP

Peru quake toll at 437 and expected to rise

LIMA, PERU—A DAY AFTER AN EARTHQUAKE DEVASTATED cities along Peru's southern coast, government officials put the death toll at 437, with at least 17,000 people displaced and with wide areas without electricity, telephone service or road access on Thursday night.

At least 300 of the dead were in Pisco, a port town about 125 south of Lima, and more were thought to be buried in rubble, local officials said. Dozens were inside the San Clemente Cathedral, which was full for Mass when the quake caved it in, around 6:40 p.m. on Wednesday. Witnesses said the spire bell clanged horribly in the seconds before it tumbled down.

"I am a real man, but last night I was scared," said Luis Chavez, 31, who was in the main square when the cathedral collapsed. "There was so much dust that all I could think of was the World Trade Center pictures."

The mayor of Pisco, Juan Mendoza Uribe, said the quake had destroyed as much as 70 percent of the city, which is about 125 miles south of Lima. "So much effort and our city is destroyed," he said, crying audibly, in comments broadcast on radio station RPP in Lima.

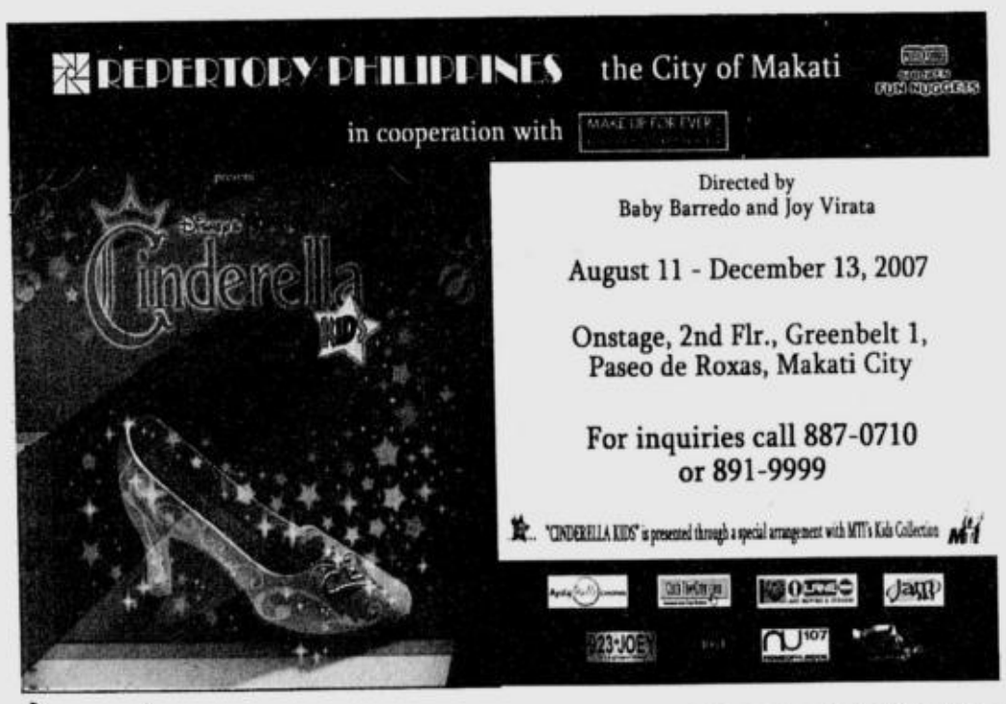
Many Pisco residents said they would sleep outside Thursday night, afraid that aftershocks could topple more structures. In the city center, the wreckage of dozens of adobe homes lay in the streets. Rescuers were often forced to walk far out of their way as they carried bodies, sometimes in shouldered coffins, toward a makeshift morgue at the hospital.

In nearby Chincha, a wall collapsed at the Tambo de Mora prison and about 680 prisoners escaped, according to Manuel Aguilar, vice president of the National Institute of Penitentiaries. About 29 were recaptured and transferred to another jail, he said.

Judith Luna Victoria, a spokesperson for the National Civil Defense Institute, said the number of confirmed dead was 437 and the number of injured was estimated at more than 800, but that the toll was sure to rise.

The US Geological Survey on Thursday raised its estimate of the strength of the earthquake to a magnitude of 8.0, making it one of the biggest quakes to strike Peru in decades.

"There are corpses all over the place; the bodies are thrown everywhere and every family is mourning over the loss of a loved one, friend, neighbor or family member," Luis Garcia, a reporter for El Comercio de Lima, said in a telephone interview from Pisco. *NYT*



WORLDBRIEFS

Hush-hush power-sharing talks in Pakistan

WASHINGTON—The United States said Thursday it was discussing reforms with key political players in Pakistan amid reported plans to get President Pervez Musharraf to share power with opposition rival Benazir Bhutto. US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice discussed the power-sharing arrangement idea in a telephone call to military ruler Musharraf last week, the New York Times reported Thursday, quoting American and Pakistani officials. Former premier Bhutto also has been holding talks in recent weeks with senior officials of President George W. Bush's administration, including US envoy to the United Nations Zalmay Khalilzad, the paper said. US officials believe that an alliance with Bhutto would be Musharraf's best chance of remaining president, the report said, noting declining domestic support for the military general, a key US "war on terror" ally. *AFP*

Shuttle heat shield needs no repair–Nasa

WASHINGTON—Nasa determined on Thursday that there was no need to attempt a risky repair to the shuttle Endeavour's heat shield because the damage did not present a significant danger, a spokesperson said. Mission management made "a unanimous recommendation that the damage that we saw, after reviewing all the engineering tests and analysis, was not a threat to crew safety," shuttle mission manager John Shannon told reporters. The concern had been that the 8.75 by 5.0 centimeter (3.5 by 2.0 inch) gash created during the shuttle's launch could create excess friction as the shuttle hurtles into the Earth's atmosphere at high speeds. *AFP*

US to give Israel $30B in military aid

JERUSALEM—Israel and the United States signed a deal on Thursday giving Israel $30 billion in military aid over the next decade in what officials called a long-term investment in peace. The officials insisted that the deal was not dependent on a simultaneous US plan for $20 billion in sales of sophisticated arms to its Arab allies in the region, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia. But Israeli officials acknowledged that the aid to Israel would make it easier for the Bush administration to win congressional approval of the arms sales to Arab countries. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel has not objected to the arms sales, saying that he understands Washington's need to boost moderate Sunni Arab states who, like Israel, are opposed to Shiite Iran's reach for regional supremacy and nuclear weapons. *NYT*

1 dead, 8 hurt in Utah mine rescue effort

LOS ANGELES—One rescue worker died and eight others were injured as desperate efforts to locate six miners buried under a Utah mountain took a tragic turn on Thursday, officials said. The fatality and injuries occurred after a seismic "bump" occurred as miners burrowed deep into the Genwal Mine in Crandall Canyon at around 6.35 p.m. local time, US Labor Department spokesperson Rich Kulczewski said. "Nine miners were injured, one of those was fatal," the spokesperson told reporters at the mine, which is located in a remote mountainous region around 193 km southeast of Salt Lake City. Kulczewski said the accident had been caused by a "seismic bump," which can occur when pressure bearing down on a mine forces a tunnel's roof, walls or floor to cave in. *AFP*

BORN 1893, WORLD'S OLDEST
114-year-old Edna Parker, from Shelbyville, Ind., became the world's oldest person Monday when a Japanese woman four months older than she died. AP

2 Korean hostages return to Seoul

SEOUL—TWO FEMALE AID WORKERS freed by Afghanistan's Taliban returned home Friday to South Korea, after learning for the first time that two fellow captives were killed during the nearly month-long ordeal.

Kim Gi-Na and Kim Kyung-Ja looked shocked and traumatized when they briefly appeared before TV cameras after landing at Incheon airport west of Seoul.

"I'm sorry for causing so much concern for the people," Kyung-Ja, 37, said in her mumbled remarks. "I hope all the remaining hostages return home at the earliest possible date."

Gi-Na, 32, added: "I only hope all the remaining people will be immediately freed."

The pair were among a group of 23 South Korean aid workers, including 16 women, who were seized by the Taliban on July 19 while traveling by coach through insurgency-plagued southern Afghanistan.

The guerrillas shot dead two male hostages to press their demands for the release of Taliban prisoners, a demand rejected by the Kabul government. *AFP*

SPORTS

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Martinez, 10, ups golden haul to 13 /A25

Federer survives; Roddick bows out /A26

Marquez trainer picks Pacquiao over Barrera

'He's fast, elusive and left-handed'

By Salven L. Lagumbay
Contributor

PUTTING NATIONALISTIC FERVOR aside, legendary Mexican trainer Ignacio "Nacho" Beristain thinks Filipino ring superstar Manny Pacquiao has what it takes to beat his countryman Marco Antonio Barerra when they collide anew on Oct. 6 in Las Vegas.

"It will be difficult for Barrera to win," Beristain told the Mexican press yesterday from his gym in Iztacalco, "Pacquiao has the style that complicates things for Barrera. He is fast, elusive and… left-handed."

Beristain's protege, WBC super featherweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez, is hoping to land a rematch with Pacquiao after he takes care of Rocky Juarez on Sept. 15 at the MGM Grand.

Beristain, who turned 16 proteges into world champions, is confident Marquez will retain his WBC title and eventually face Pacquiao in a rematch.

In a recent interview in Sacramento, California, Beristain maintained that Marquez has what it takes to beat Pacquiao.

Marquez came back from three first-round knockdowns to salvage a draw with Pacquiao in 2004.

The Filipino ring hero stepped up his training with two-time Trainer of the Year Freddie Roach yesterday at the Rex "Wakee" Salud gym in Cebu City.

Roach, who held the mitts for the Pacman for eight rounds, two more than in their first workout Friday.

Pacquiao, who is aiming to duplicate his 11th-round stoppage of Barrera in 2003, also shadow-boxed under the supervision of his Filipino trainer Buboy Fernandez with assistance from Robert Bubuli and Bebot Galendez.

The famous fighter from GenSan started his training regimen by jogging for nearly an hour at the hilly Alta Vista Golf and Country Club.

"I think that was a five-kilometer stretch but I felt I ran for 10 kilometers because of the uphill climb," said Pacquiao.

"I like the place. It really made Manny sweat," said Roach, who, along with the other trainers and comedian Long Mejia, trailed Pacquiao in a Toyota Hi-Ace van.

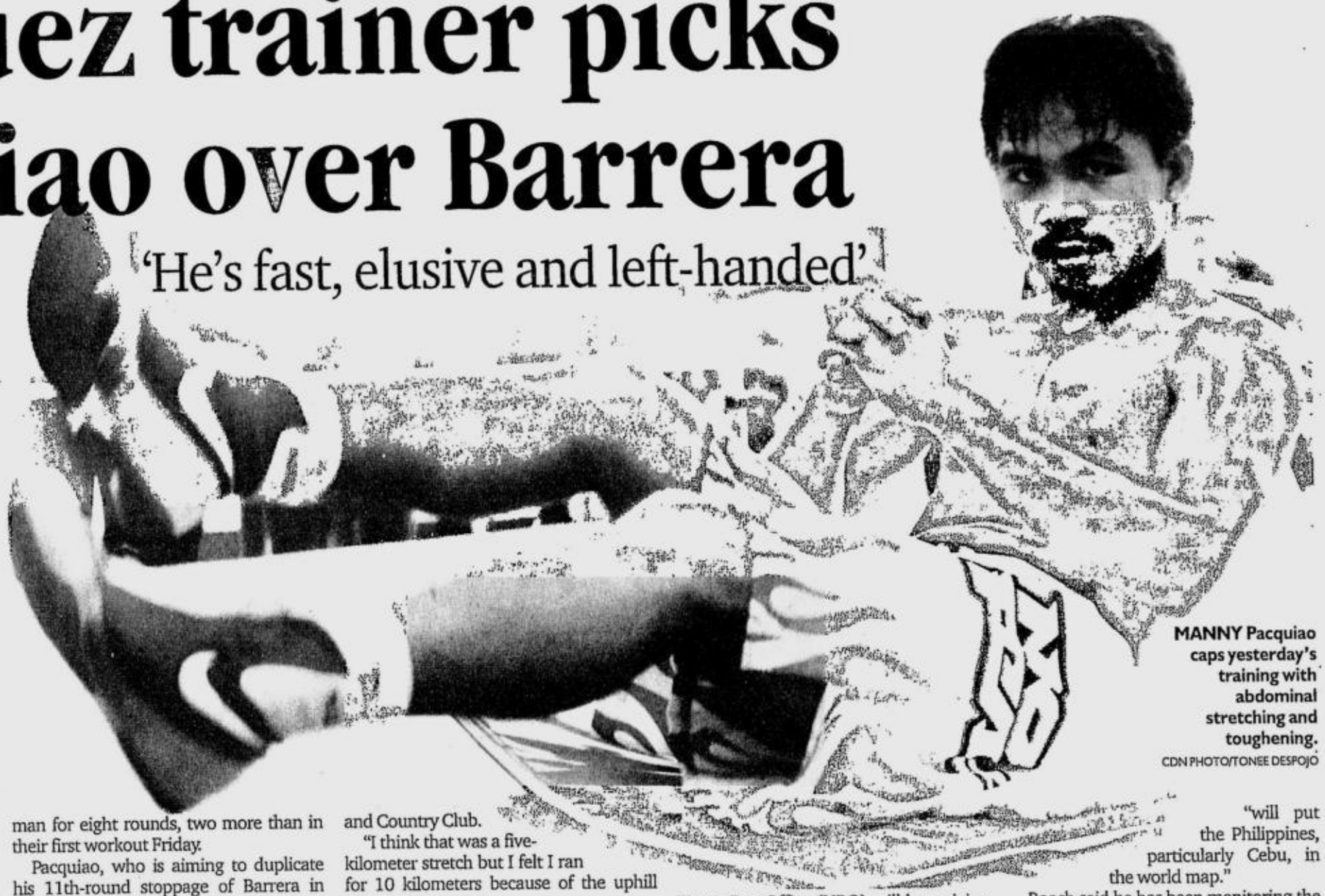
In a related development, representatives of giant cable television company Home Box Office (HBO) will be arriving next week to cover Pacquiao's training.

"I think they're going to make a 24/7 coverage like what they did to one of the fights of Bernard Hopkins," said Roach.

Salud, Pacquiao's close associate, welcomed the news, saying the coverage "will put the Philippines, particularly Cebu, in the world map."

Roach said he has been monitoring the Pacquiao's sleeping time. He said implementing a curfew is unnecessary.

"Manny is a disciplined person and he knows he needs to get enough rest," said Roach. *With a report from Calvin D. Cordova, Cebu Daily News*



MANNY Pacquiao caps yesterday's training with abdominal stretching and toughening. CDN PHOTO/TONEE DESPOJO

Webb looks out for ex-pros

By Musong R. Castillo

NOTHING PAINS Freddie Webb more than hearing stories about former star players in the PBA who ended up with no means of livelihood after playing.

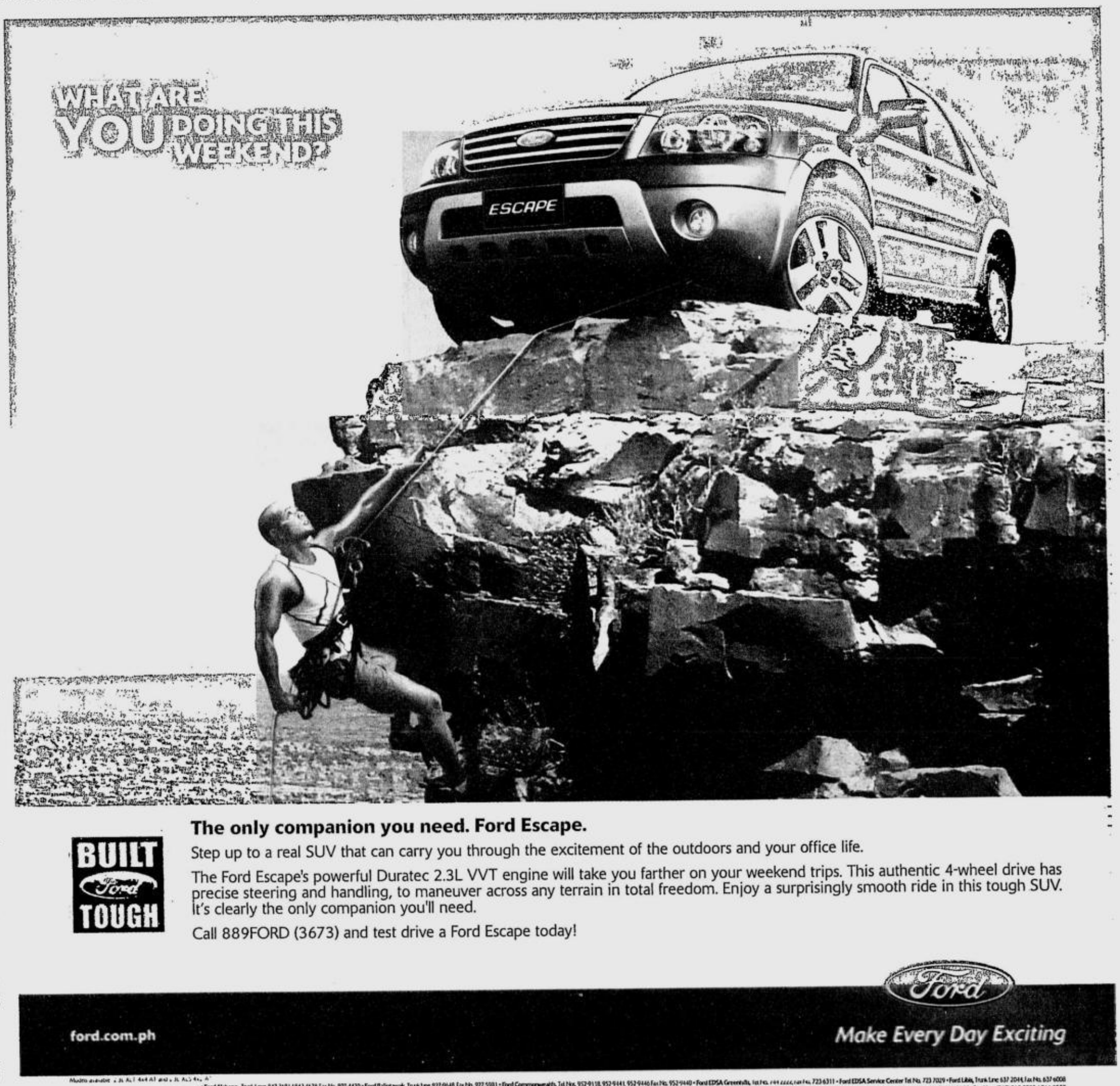
A lot of them go back to poverty because they do not know how to handle their money," Webb told the INQUIRER in Filipino yesterday.

It was a statement that actually started a conversation on his candidacy for the PBA commissionership, which will be deliberated upon by a new league committee next week.

"If chosen, that's one of the first things that I would do—teach them (players) on how to spend their money wisely," Webb said. "It's a case of too fast and too soon for many players. They have to be guided in business (as a fallback).

Webb, who wasn't named as the OIC because "he would be disqualified in the race for commissioner," remains one of the strongest bets for the slot given up by Noli Eala, who resigned recently.

League chair Tony Chua of Red Bull said the board still hasn't decided on who the next commissioner will be after appointing Renauld "Sonny" Barrios as officer-in-charge on Monday.



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It's either Eman or Devance for Welcoat

By Musong R. Castillo

JUST HOW IMPORTANT IS THE FIRST overall pick in tomorrow's PBA Rookie Draft?

It appears it won't be as important as the next year's exercise.

Welcoat, the cellar-dweller in its first two tournaments last season, is getting all sorts of offers for "marquee big men" from three teams it declined to name.

In exchange, these three teams are looking at the Dragons' first-round pick—not for tomorrow but for next year. And it could turn out to be crack Fil-American point guard Gabe Norwood.

"They (teams) think that we will still own the first pick next year for finishing last again this year," Welcoat coach Leo Austria told the INQUIRER in Filipino over the phone. "Let's just keep the identities of the players [being offered] a secret.

EMAN

DEVANCE

"But they are all marquee names, quality big men."

Austria admitted his need for good centers to make the Dragons a formidable force—the reason he has trimmed down his choices for the No. 1 pick to Samigue Eman and Joe Devance.

And if that trade happens, he said, then he would be willing to gamble "losing the No. 1 pick next year even if it turns out to be Norwood."

Another option for Austria is to pick either former Ateneo hotshot JC Intal or point guard Ryan Reyes tomorrow.

Norwood, the 6-foot-5 point guard from George Mason University, an NCAA Division I squad, played for the RP team that settled for ninth place in the Fiba Asia men's championship in Tokushima, Japan.

Norwood said he's willing to come back and play in the commercial PBL, with the pro league as his next natural stop. And this has set up a frenzied chase among teams to win Welcoat's heart.

If they don't get to beef up this season, chances are that the Dragons could languish in the cellar yet again and get a prime shot at winning the No. 1 pick.

"What we are after is a respectable finish [in our second season]," Austria said. "If we can get that this year, we would agree with the trade, because we won't be gaining the No. 1 pick next year if we do that."

The Draft is scheduled at the Market! Market! in Taguig tomorrow with San Miguel picking second followed by Sta. Lucia, Coca-Cola, Air21, Alaska, Air21 again, San Miguel Beer and Barangay Ginebra, in that order.

Asiad champ's son shines

By June Navarro

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—NO LESS than a gold was expected from the son of Asian Games boxing champion Roberto Jalnaiz in the Mindanao qualifying leg of the Philippine Olympic Festival.

And nine-year-old Roberto Jr. didn't disappoint—though he captured the gold not in boxing, but in the junior category of the muay thai competition yesterday at the provincial capitol here.

With his illustrious father at ringside, Jalnaiz outclassed Mark Anthony Corpuz of Sultan Kudarat in the 42-kilogram division to highlight another day of sterling performances from athletes of hosts Cagayan de Oro and Misamis Oriental on various fronts.

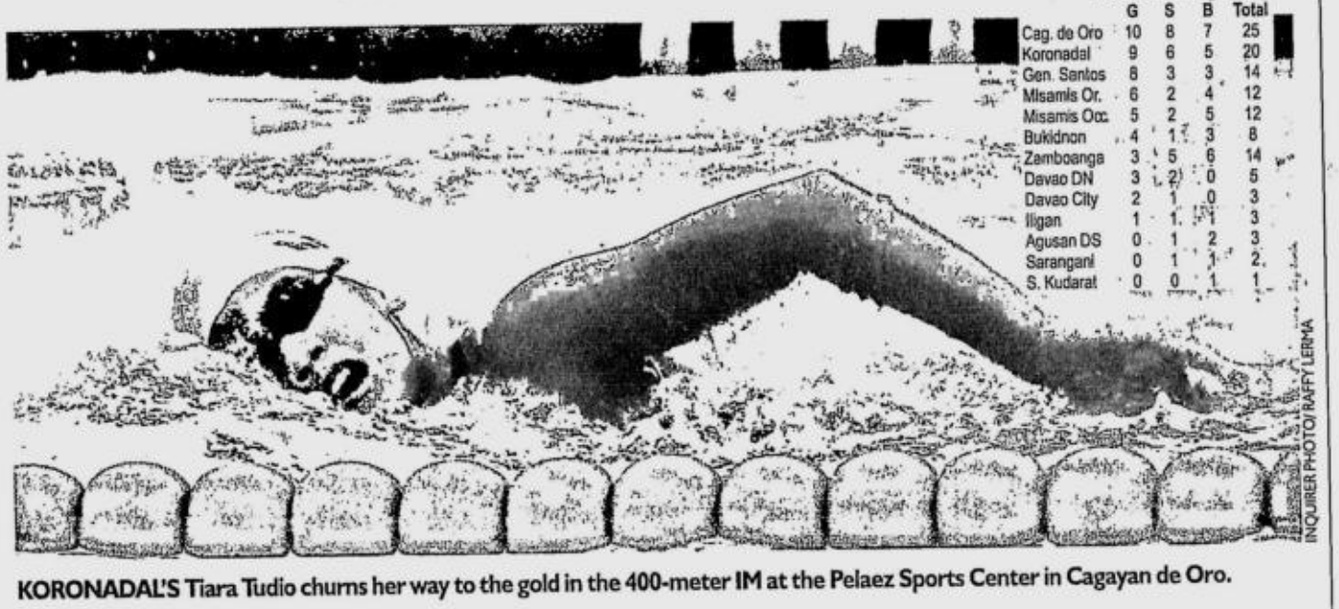
Jalnaiz hopes to follow the glorious path blazed by his father, now CDO's boxing coach, who was the lone gold medalist for the RP contingent in the 1990 Beijing Asiad.

But since boxing is not on the roster of events here, the young Jalnaiz opted to compete in muay thai or kick boxing.

His win gave Misamis Oriental six golds on top of two silvers and four bronze medals, good for fourth overall behind the 10-8-7 collection of leader Cagayan de Oro.

MEDAL TALLY

	G	S	B	Total
Cag. de Oro	10	8	7	25
Koronadal	9	6	5	20
Gen. Santos	8	3	3	14
Misamis Or.	6	2	4	12
Misamis Occ.	5	2	5	12
Bukidnon	4	1	3	8
Zamboanga	3	5	6	14
Davao DN	3	2	0	5
Davao City	2	1	0	3
Iligan	1	1	1	3
Agusan DS	0	1	2	3
Saranganí	0	1	1	2
S. Kudarat	0	0	1	1



INQUIRER PHOTO/ RAFFY LERMA

KORONADAL'S Tiara Tudio churns her way to the gold in the 400-meter IM at the Pelaez Sports Center in Cagayan de Oro.

Misamis Oriental earlier pocketed two gold medals in track and field through Michael Oro in the men's long jump and Patrick Gongdo in the boys' 3000-meter steeplechase.

Val Noel Dorato of Misamis Oriental also ruled the table tennis standing division for differently abled athletes and Janine Dy of CDO subdued Jean Rose Sibonga of Saranggani for the table tennis under-14 title.

Bukidnon's Darwin Salvacion took the gold in the wheelchair division on the final day of table tennis competition.

Misamis Oriental's Serknight Benoya, 10, exacted revenge on his brother, Sergio, of CDO in the finals of the boys' under-14 event after losing in their five-set matchup earlier in the elimination.

Koronadal also moved to contend for the overall title courtesy of its swimmers and crack archer Roxanne Jane Loria.

Koronadal's five swim golds came through Ralph Ian Aloot (100m freestyle, 12-under), Bonifacio Pagunsan (100m free, 13-under), Tiara Tudio (100m free, 12-under), Alexa Mae Espino (100m free, 150-under) and Jorev Castanares (100m back, 14-under).

However, Loria failed to secure a fifth gold after Koronadal lost to host Misamis Oriental in the team event, 132-131.

Other athletics results saw, Benjie Datago snare a fourth gold for GenSan in shotput and Carlito Sumondong rule the 110 hurdles for Misamis Occidental.

BATTLE OF THE SEXES: A Blu Girls base runner barely beats the throw to first base in a recent tune-up game against the men's team of Rizal Technological University which the national squad won in extra inning, 3-1. The Blu Girls, composed of the country's finest softball talents, left yesterday for the Asian Women's Softball Championship which starts Sunday in Jakarta.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

UAAP twinbill today reset due to 'Egay'

JUST MOMENTS AFter Ateneo's thrilling overtime triumph over rival La Salle in the first round, coach Norman Black tried to keep his Blue Eagles on the ground.

"It's hard to really celebrate too much," said Black. "It will be difficult and disappointing if we beat La Salle then lose [our next game]."

STANDINGS	W	L
UE	8	0
UST	5	3
La Salle	5	3
FEU	5	3
Ateneo	4	4
NU	4	4
Adamson	1	7
UP	0	8

*Games scheduled today were moved to a later date to be announced soon

Black's fears proved true as the Eagles' campaign in the UAAP men's basketball tournament took a nosedive.

But the Eagles have to wait another week to redeem themselves after league officials called off today's games due to typhoon "Egay."

The Eagles, who opened the season with a 4-1 run, was set to arrest a three-game slide against the winless University of the Philippines Maroons at 2 p.m. today at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

From solo second spot, the Eagles went down to 4-4 for a share of fifth with the National U Bulldogs, whose 4 p.m. bid for back-to-back victories versus the Adamson Falcons was also reset.

Host University of Santo Tomas will announce today if Sunday's games will push through.

A fourth-quarter meltdown had been hitting the Eagles, putting to waste the strong starts of Chris Tiu, Jai Reyes and rookie forward Nonoy Baclao.

Even after veteran big man Ford Arao regained his form in his last outing, it didn't prove enough as the Eagles bowed to the unbeaten University of the East Warriors, 73-68, last Sunday.

Practically out of Final Four contention, the Maroons absorbed their eighth straight loss in another blowout, 85-66, against the NU Bulldogs last Saturday.

The Falcons, ranked near-bottom at 1-7, was also set to get out of a rut with league-leading scorer Patrick Cabahug and Roel Hugnatan. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Knights-Bombers tiff washed out

GAMES WEDNESDAY
(*The Arena, San Juan*)
11:30 a.m.—Jose Rizal U vs San Beda (Jrs)
2 p.m.—Jose Rizal U vs San Beda (Srs)
4 p.m.—St. Benilde vs Mapua (Srs)

LETRAN'S MARCH TO THE FInal Four—or Jose Rizal's repeat of its first-round upset of the Knights—will have to wait until typhoon Egay has ended its onslaught.

The NCAA management committee yesterday cancelled the Knights-Bombers basketball game and the one pitting San Sebastian and Perpetual Help scheduled at The Arena in San Juan yesterday due to the inclement weather.

Mancom chief Paul Supan said the games will be moved, tentatively to Sept. 7 at the same venue.

"Due to heavy rains and the suspension of classes, the Aug. 17 games will be moved to a later play date," said Supan of JRU. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

SPORTSWATCH

Bayron closes with 75, settles for share of 17th

JAY BAYRON CRACKED UNDER PRESSsure and fumbled with a four-over-par 75 Thursday to finish in joint 17th in the the 2007 Scratch Players Golf Championship at the Del Rio Country Club course in Modesto, California.

Bayron, who sparked hopes of contending for the crown with a 65 in the second round, shot a 70 in the third round before closing with his worst score in four days.

He wound up with a one-under 283, 11 strokes behind Rick Kulacz, who ruled the event with a 272 despite a 73.

He beat China's Mu Chu, who had a 67, by one shot. Rob Grube of Illinois was third, another stroke farther adrift at 274.

Hitachi Nat'l Criterium GP gets going today in Davao

THE HITACHI NATIONAL CRITERIUM Grand Prix wheels off in Davao City today as one of the highlights of the annual Kadayawan Festival.

Dubbed as the Mayor Rodrigo Duterte Cup, the third leg of the criterium races sponsored by Hitachi, Globe and NCCC malls will be staged at the sprawling Crocodile Park Riverfront Corporate City.

"The cycling event will make the Kadayawan Festival more special," said Duterte.

"Davaoeños will have a grand time watching the races," said Leo Hsieh, president of Hitachi Phils. Airconditioning.

The one-day bikefest will also hold mountain bike races as one of its sidelights, according to project events director Ric Rodriguez of Pro Ads Concepts, Inc.

Boys' volley under way

TWENTY-FIVE TEAMS ARE SEEING ACtion in the Petron Treats Boys' Volleyball League starting today at Colegio de San Lorenzo Sports Complex in Quezon City.

After the 9 a.m. opening rites, Canossa Academy-Lipa plunges into action at 10 a.m. against Batasan Hills High School while Lorenzo Ruiz de Manila battles Claret School of QC at 11 a.m.

"Hopefully, we could also play in Bacolod, Iloilo and Cebu next year," said organizer Freddie Infante.

Marlon Bernardino, Contributor

Bacani net camp listing on

JUNIOR TENNIS ENTHUSIASTS CAN JOIN the free tennis clinic of the Smart-Butch Bacani Tennis Camp from this month to January next year at the Philippine Columbian Association courts in Plaza Dilao, Paco.

The schedule for beginners is every Saturday at from 10 a.m. to 12 noon, while the elite program is set for Wednesday and Friday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday sessions are from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. while Sunday clinics are from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Bacani, a former Philippine Davis Cup captain, said the camp is open to all junior players 8 to 18 years old.

LPC derby lures 50 entries

MORE THAN 50 ENTRIES FROM PARAñaque, Pasay, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas and Cavite collide today in a special 2-cock derby at Las Piñas Coliseum.

The format and low entry fee of P3,300 allow participants to field three entries each, said host Baldo Perez of Batangas. Entries must be submitted until 2 p.m. today.

Meanwhile, participants in the upcoming LPC 7-Stag Derby on Aug. 23 and 25 may bring their stags today and tomorrow at LPC for final screening, said coliseum manager Alex Tobias.

Final Makati cockfest all set

THE LAST DERBY OF THE 2007 COCK season unfolds at the Makati Coliseum on Monday, Aug. 20.

Dubbed as "Huling Hirit" 3-cock derby, the event will be hosted by Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp., and supported by B-Meg Derby Ace and Gran Matador.

According to Orillaza, the guaranteed prize of P200,000 will be given out to the winners regardless of the actual number of entries. Entry fee is P5,500.

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NISSAN

Martinez, 10, ups golden haul to 13

A 10-YEAR-OLD FILIPINO WON THREE more gold medals in emphatic fashion to emerge as the most bemedalled skater with 13 on the penultimate day of the 2007 Skate Asia yesterday at the SM Mall of Asia.

SM Southmall's Michael Christian Martinez ruled the 10-12 mixed Solo Dance 3, topped the 10-14 male Freestyle 6 and then partnered Jana Camille Cavanas for the gold in the 9-10 mixed Dance 3.

Counting his victories in Speed Racing, Figure 2, Rhythmic Ball, Family Spotlight, Interpretative, Artistic, Solo Compulsory, Jump and Spin, Footwork and Spotlight events, Martinez now has surpassed his previous haul of 11 in the Shenzhen, China, edition last year.

"I'm happy with my performance, as well as with my improvement this year," said Martinez, who also won 11 gold medals in 12 events in the recent World Team Championship in the United States.

With still six events left, Martinez is tipped to dominate his local and foreign rivals anew and rake in more gold medals.

"He practiced almost four hours a day for this tournament," Martinez's mother, Maria Teresa, said. "The result has been very overwhelming considering that he just started to skate two years ago."

Other Southmall stalwarts who reigned in their divisions were JC Ingeniero (22-32 mixed Solo Dance 1), Chriselle Jeanne Mereader and Julia Napenas (7-12 mixed Dance 1) and Noelle Cielito Soriano (11 female Freestyle 5).

Those feats gave SM Southmall an aggregate of 2180.5 points but SM Megamall virtually clinched the overall crown with 5901.0.

Indonesia's Skyrink-Jakarta was a far third with 676 points while Hong Kong's Festival Walk Glacier and SM International had 630 and 513, respectively.

Other gold medal winners on Day 6: Chelsea Gibbons (16-21 female Solo Dance 3 and 14-17 female Freestyle 5), Jana Camille Cavanas and Mary Ann Limjoco (9-12 female Solo Dance 4), Gimelle Ballesteros and Eri Reyes (11-14 female Similar Dance 3); Mikhaela Lee (6-7 female Solo Dance 1), Alvira Sunjaya (8-10 mixed Solo Dance 1), Julia Ignacio (11 female Solo Dance 1), Nicole Victoria Ceballos (13-16 Solo Dance 1), Danica Leslie Icaranom (12 female Solo Dance 1 and 12-13 female Freestyle 5), Julia Ignacio and Lindsay Garcia 10-16 female Similar Dance 1); Arlene Carino (12-16 female Solo Dance 2), Maciko Audrey Chan (8-10 female Freestyle 5), Noelle Cielito Soriano (11 female Freestyle 5), Lei Hon Kei 13-16 (male Freestyle 5), Chelcie Jo Mahinay (10-12 female Freestyle 6) and Eingel Batrice Ferrer (15-16 female Freestyle 6).

CHELSIE Jo Mahinay pulls off a flawless piroutte en route to the gold in the Freestyle 6 event of the Skate Asia 2007 at the SM Mall of Asia. PDI PHOTO/RYAN LIM

Alcano, 3 other RP bets down rivals

REIGNING DOUBLE world champion Ronnie Alcano, Lee Vann Corteza, Jose "Amang" Parica and Dennis Orcollo hurdled their respective rivals yesterday at the start of the IX Turning Stone Classic 9-Ball Tournament at the Turning Stone Resort & Casino in Verona, New York.

Alcano thwarted Tony Ruberto, 9-5, Corteza outplayed Redgie Cutler, 9-6, Parica overwhelmed Pete Kramer, 9-1, and Orcollo trounced Ron Casanzio, 9-1.

Up next for Alcano is Ignacio Chavez, a 9-5 winner over Chris Lynch; Parica next tackles Dick Cappotto, who beat Steve Murphy, 9-5; Corteza faces Holdin Chin, who blasted Pete Comali, 9-0; and Orcollo takes on Canadian-based Filipino Al Lapeña, who dealt Frank Harris a 9-2 defeat.

However, victories by Parica and Alcano may mean a possible third-round showdown.

The $25,000 tournament has drawn a total of 128 players, with the winner pocketing $12,000.

The Netherlands' Neils Feijen, Europe's current No. 1 player, is looking for his third straight Turning Stone championship.

He won his first match against Bill Dunsmore, 9-2. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

Illam eyes Int'l finals vs Canada

THE PHILIPPINES' ILLAM CENTRAL LL from Makati continued to make heads turn in the Junior League Baseball World Series yesterday by scoring an abbreviated 11-0 win over Ukraine's Kirovograd for a sweep of the international pool in Taylor, Michigan.

Little was expected from the Illam batters since the Asia-Pacific region that they represent has never gone beyond one win in the history of the 10-team tournament.

The tide has turned this year, though, with the Filipinos needing just four-and-a-half innings to put away the Ukrainians for their fourth win in as many games.

The local boys go into the international pool finals against Canada early today as the solid favorite owing to their 6-3 win over the Canadians earlier.

Seeking World Series slot

If Illam wins, it goes into the World Series final against the United States champion team, which is a toss-up between Hawaii's Pearl City and Texas' Laredo.

The Filipinos scored four runs in the first inning and six in the third built on 10 hits and aided by nine errors by the Ukrainians.

Charles Catangui, Andrei Herrera and S.J. San Juan took turns on the mound, limiting the Ukrainians to just two hits, while Miko Habana and Andrew Tan belted two hits apiece, according to the World Series website.

Meanwhile, Bacolod-Negros bombed out of the Junior League softball World Series following a 3-7 loss at the hands of US-Central squad Boardman of Ohio.

It was the Bacolod softbelles' third loss in four matches.

Cedelf P. Tupas, Inquirer Visayas

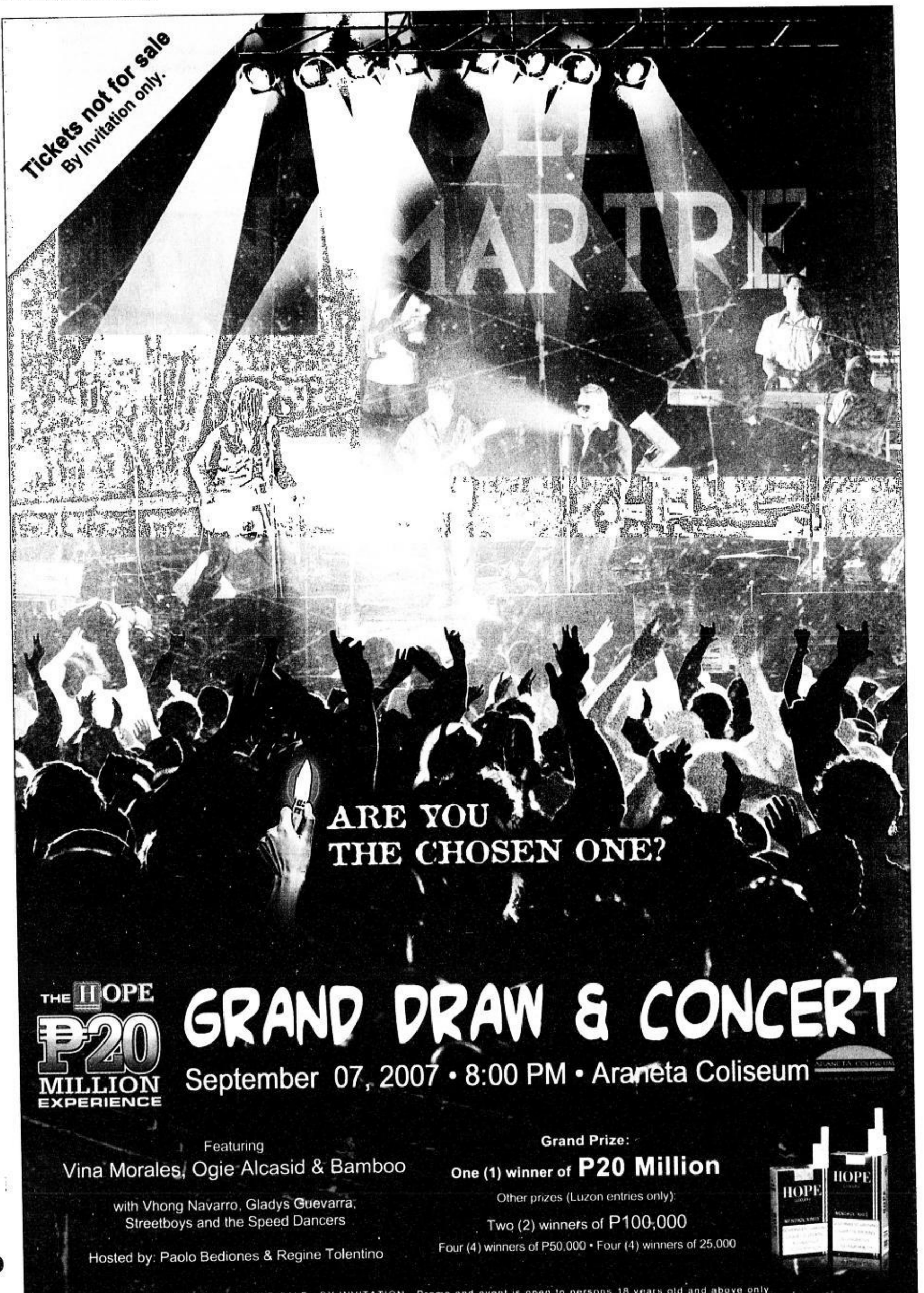
Air Force XI stops Kaya in Razon Cup

AIR FORCE TOOK THE EARLY INITIATIVE AND was rewarded with a close 2-1 win over erstwhile unbeaten Kaya last weekend in the 2nd Terry Razon Copa Filipina Football League at the Nomads pitch in Parañaque City.

Winnie Subere and Emelio Caligdong scored for the Airmen in the 29th and 40th minutes before ex-RP team skipper Aly Borromeo struck back for the Kaya's lone marker in the 56th minute.

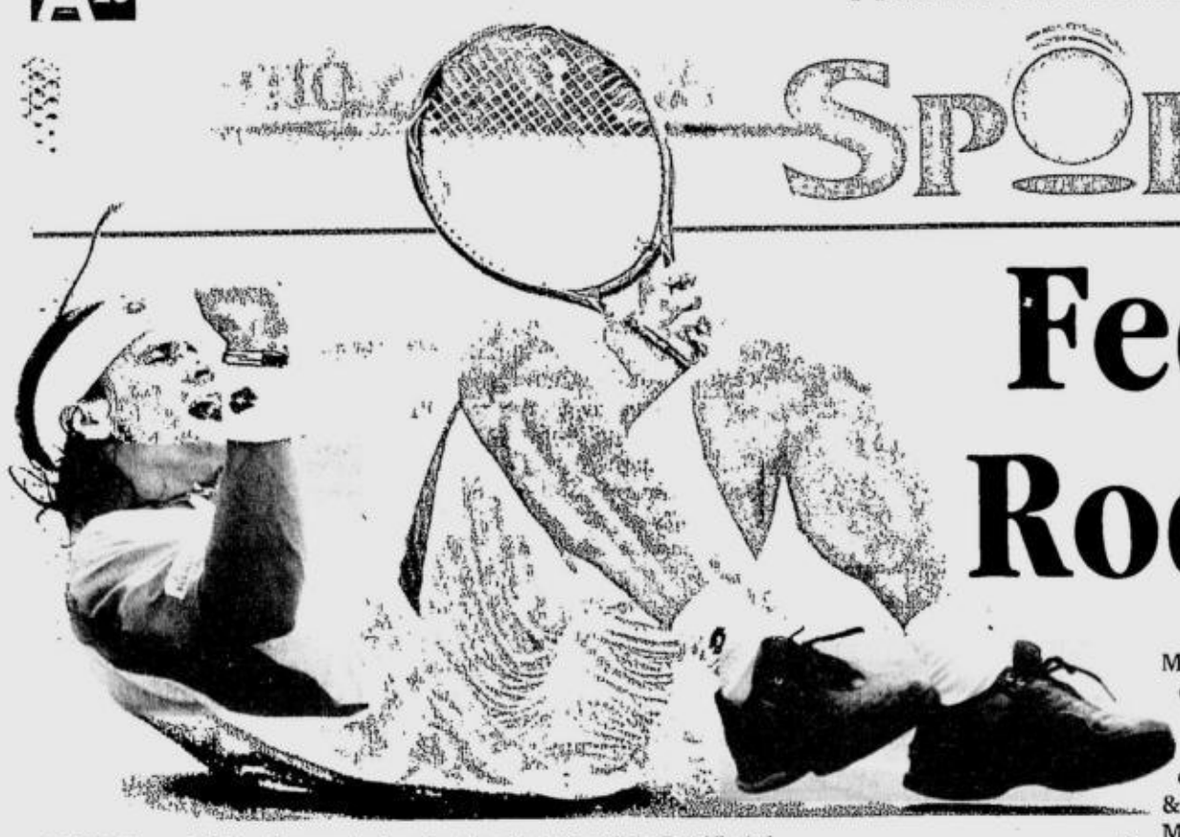
Air Force and Kaya now share top spot in the Club Division with similar 4-1 cards in the event organized by the National Capital Region Football Association with Nike as the official ball.

In other matches, defending champion Union FC whipped Pasargad, 3-0, for only its second win in six matches and Air Force and Kaya earlier picked up their third wins by routing Lions FC, 4-0, and Army, 3-1, respectively.



Government Warning:
Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

SPORTS



DAVID Ferrer falls to the court after beating Andy Roddick, 7-6 (4), 6-4. AP

Federer survives; Roddick bows out

MASON, OHIO—ROGER FEDerer survived a scare from Marcos Baghdatis on Thursday to move into the quarterfinals of the Western & Southern Financial Group Masters, which has been brutal to seeded players this week.

Federer beat Baghdatis, 7-6 (5), 7-5, shortly after David Ferrer ousted defending champion Andy Roddick, 7-6 (4), 6-4.

Baghdatis has never beaten Federer in five matches, but pushed the No. 1 player on tour as he did a year ago in the Australian Open, when Federer won in four sets.

"Basically, I gave the first set away," said Baghdatis, who helped Federer fight off two set points with a double-fault.

Only four seeds remain, including No. 9 James Blake, who beat Juan Carlos Ferrero, 6-1, 6-4, in an evening match. Blake said he's no longer serving as tentatively as he was earlier this week, after pulling a stomach muscle a week ago.

The field for Friday's quarterfinals includes three players from Spain, two from the United States and one each from Switzerland, Russia and Australia.

The fallen seeds include No. 3 Roddick and No. 2 Rafael Nadal, who retired on Wednesday with cramps in his wrist and arm. No. 4 Novak Djokovic already lost to Carlos Moya, who stayed alive Thursday by beating Juan Martin Del Potro, 7-5, 3-6, 7-5, in a match in 110-degree heat on center court.

No. 5 Nikolay Davydenko beat No. 10 Tomas Berdych, 6-3, 6-2; Lleyton Hewitt topped Jurgen Melzer, 6-3, 6-3; Nicolas Almagro defeated Jarkko Nieminen, 6-2, 6-2; and Sam Querry downed Juan Monaco, 6-3, 7-5.

Federer, who is seeking his 50th ATP title, said despite his erratic performance Thursday he felt he was in the flow of the tournament. He will face Almagro in Friday's quarterfinals.

Roddick won the event in 2003 and 2006. *AP*

Henin gains hardcourt q'finals

TORONTO—WORLD NUMBER one Justine Henin advanced to the quarterfinals of this $1.34-million hardcourt tournament on schedule Thursday with a 7-6, 6-2 victory over China's Peng Shuai.

Henin, titlist here in 2003, has looked sharp in her first two matches of this US Open tuneup, her first tournament since she was shocked by France's Marion Bartoli in the Wimbledon semifinals.

Henin next faces Russian Nadia Petrova, who beat Patty Schnyder of Switzerland, 6-4, 6-1.

In one of Thursday's two night matches, second seed Jelena Jankovic of Serbia beat Sybille Bammer of Austria, 6-2, 6-3.

The winner of that match will face France's Virginie Razzano, who dismissed Israel's Shahar Peer, 6-4, 6-3. *AFP*

LAURA Diaz: Flashes of fiery form REUTERS

Diaz grabs 1-shot lead

EDMONTON, CANADA—AMERICAN LAUra Diaz shot a six-under-par 65 to seize the early advantage on Thursday at the $2.25 million Canadian Women's Open.

Diaz, who had finished 12th or better in three straight tournaments to end July before missing the cut at the Women's British Open at St. Andrews two weeks ago, is seeking her first tour victory since 2002 and the third of her career.

Kelli Kuehne and South Korea's Kyeong Bae are tied for second place, one shot behind Diaz at 5-under.

The world's top-ranked player, Lorena Ochoa, shot a 1-under 70 after missing this tournament last year. Fresh off winning her first major title—she won the British Open on Aug. 5—Ochoa is looking to add to her tour-leading four wins and 14 top-10 finishes in 17 events.

Filipina Jennifer Rosales settled for a 76, 11 shots off the pace.

Cristie Kerr, who won this event in astounding fashion last year when she overcame an eight-shot, shot a 69. *AFP*

Beijing bans 1M cars in Olympic test

BEIJING—BEIJING BANNED MORE than one million cars from its roads on Friday in a test run to improve air quality for the Olympics, easing notorious gridlock although a thick smog still hung over the city.

More than 6,500 traffic police were on duty across the city to ensure car owners observed the ban, while an extra two million more trips were expected to be taken on subways and buses during the day, officials said.

The four-day test is expected to be a prelude for a similar ban to be put in place for the duration of the August 2008 Olympics, as part of a range of measures to temporarily improve air quality for athletes and visitors. *AFP*

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BUSINESS

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Gov't posts surprise budget surplus of ₱1.6B

Teves says fiscal program now back on track

By Michelle V. Remo

PROCEEDS FROM PRIVATIZATION and low interest rates helped the national government post a P1.6-billion budget surplus in July, prompting authorities to declare that the full-year fiscal target has become attainable despite the slippage in the first half.

The government generated P104 billion in revenues as against P102.4 billion in expenditures, the Department of Finance reported yesterday.

"(The fiscal performance in July) gives us confidence that the deficit will not breach the target of P63 billion for the entire year," said Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, adding the government was sticking to the full-year goal despite earlier doubts on its capability to do so.

Fiscal data for July brought the government's budget position for the first seven months to a deficit of P39.4 billion, better than the P52.3-billion ceiling under the government's fiscal program for January to July.

GOV'T POSTS/ B6

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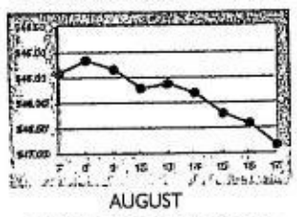
CURRENCIES



AUGUST

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

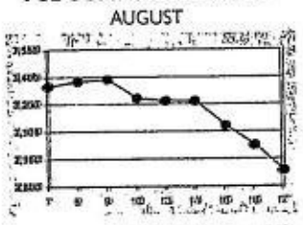
₱46.85 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Aug. 17, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

AUGUST



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Peso hits 3-month low of 46.90 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY TUMBLED TO A three-month low of 46.90 to a dollar before closing at 46.85 as the problematic US housing sector continued to weaken investor sentiment on emerging markets.

The peso shed another 42 centavos against the greenback from Thursday's closing of 46.43:$1. Currency traders said the peso would have fallen further if not for the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' intervention at the spot foreign exchange market.

Asked about its alleged intervention, BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said: "We're monitoring the market very closely. Our policy is to moderate volatility."

But the BSP chief said that compared to other currencies in the region, the peso's fluctuation was still in the middle of the range based on different measures of volatility.

Tetangco said global worries over the worsening subprime housing market in the United States continued to exert pressure on the peso.

"So the markets are reassessing risk and we may continue to see some volatility in both forex and equity markets as this process continues," Tetangco said in a press briefing.

"But once the external factors settle down and markets once again refocus on fundamentals, we should see a positive effect on our own markets given that the Philippines continues to have a sound macroeconomic fundamentals," the BSP chief added.

The BSP chief reiterated that Philippine banks were not exposed to the problematic US subprime market as the structured financial products in their books under collateralized debt obligations (CDOs) constituted only 0.2 percent of the banking system's total assets.

CDOs are a type of security backed by assets and a structured credit product which serve an important funding vehicle for portfolio investments in credit-risky assets like the subprime mortgage market in the US.

Tetangco said Philippine banks' CDOs contained only assets that were A-rated or even higher.

But Tetangco said it's important that economic disruptions from these external jitters would be kept manageable.

"As markets reassess risk and as investors adjust their portfolios, economic prices can naturally be expected to change. That's why it's important that this process is done in an orderly fashion so there's no disruption," he said.

Other currencies in the region also succumbed to widespread panic among global investors despite Asia's little exposure to

PESO HITS/ B3

Gov't forms mining groups

Councils to find ways to develop minerals sector

By Amy R. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT HAS FORMED Regional Minerals Development Councils to better coordinate the implementation of mining projects in the regions.

The National Economic Development Authority said the creation of the councils was provided by Executive Order 460, which called for the creation of a Minerals Development Council in 2005.

Headed by the regional directors of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the regional councils will assist the MDC in implementing policies to further develop the mining industry in the regions.

Also represented in the councils are the Departments of Interior and Local Government, Finance, Trade and Industry, Agrarian Reform, Agriculture, Defense, Labor and Employment, the Presidential Management Staff, National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, National Anti-Poverty Commission, Philippine Information Agency and the private sector.

The local mining industry got a short in the arm in 2004 when investments started coming in.

Foreign investors became even more bullish when the Supreme Court affirmed the validity of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995.

They declared then their "extremely favorable" outlook for the country's mining sector.

This optimistic climate was further boosted by the availability of skilled Filipino miners and engineers and strong government support for the stability of these laws.

By 2010, the sector can expect total capital investments to hit $10 billion due to the influx of new investments, according to Chamber of Mines president Benjamin Philip Romualdez.

Romualdez also said he welcomed the creation of the councils.

He said these would help "work out the issues among the communities, local government and the mining companies, but only to a certain degree."

He added that he was optimistic about the sector's prospects, estimating that foreign investments will hit about $1 billion a year, in the next five years, starting 2008.

The Philippines is said to have $1 trillion worth of unexplored gold, copper and nickel resources.

For this reason, the government's Medium-Term Philippine Development Plan for 2004 to 2010 aims to promote responsible mining that adheres to the principles of sustainable development.

To achieve this thrust, the government has launched programs to pursue responsible mining such as the Minerals Action Plan, which provides for the creation of the MDC and the RMDCs.

JG Summit H1 income down to P3.8B

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

JG SUMMIT HOLDINGS INC., THE FLAGSHIP company of the Gokongwei group of companies, has reported a drop in its first half income to P3.84 billion from P4.05 billion last year.

The company told the Philippine Stock Exchange, however, that the drop was largely due to the one-time gain last year of P3.21 billion from the sale of JG Summit's stake in Universal Robina Corp. (URC).

Excluding this one-time gain, recurring net income in the first half would have grown 355 percent from P842 million last year.

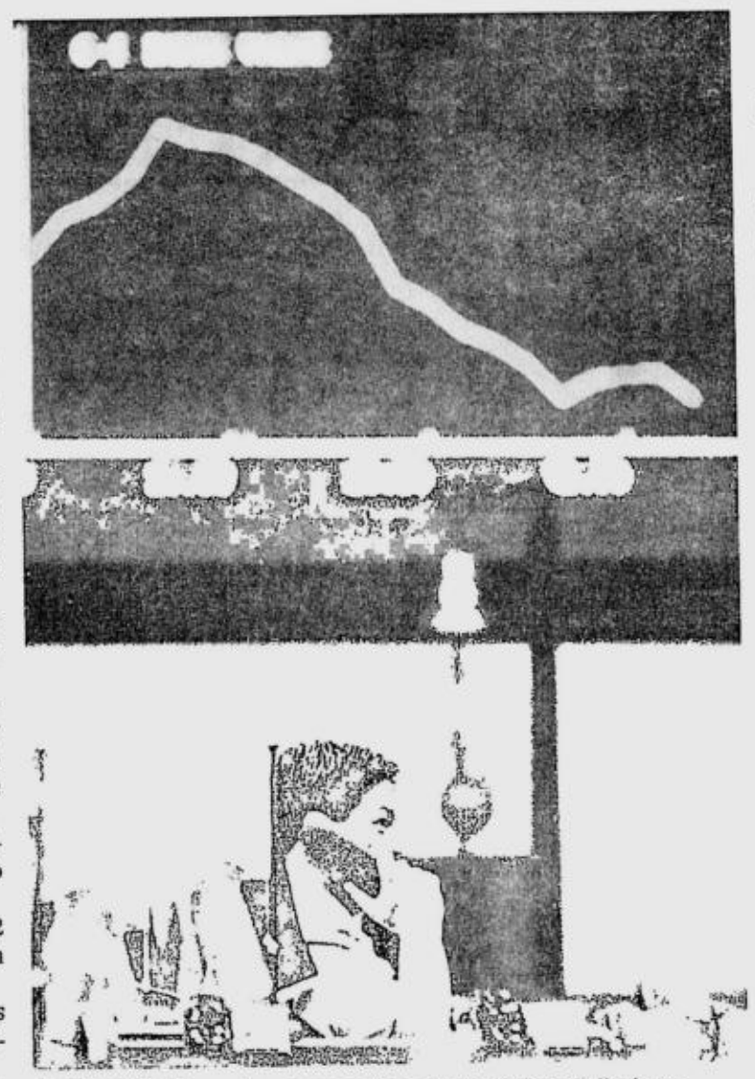
The improvement in the company's recurring net income in the first half was fueled by the record growth contributions of Gebu Pacific, as it reported a P2.07-billion net income in the first half from P72.82 million last year.

Exchange gains from the continued appreciation of the peso against the US dollar also contributed to the company's bottom line.

Consolidated revenues increased 6.2 percent in the first half to P41.56 billion from P39.13 billion last year.

Revenue growth was driven mainly by its airline business, which posted a 70.1-percent sales growth.

The rest of company's core businesses also contributed to the growth, except for its petrochemicals business, which registered a 53-percent decline in sales.



A TRADER talks on the phone as the electronic board displays a downtrend yesterday. The composite index closed Friday at this year's new low of 2,884.34 points, with lingering concerns that US shares may fall further. AP

Nasdaq firm expands through RP unit

By Ronnel W. Domingo

NASDAQ-LISTED KFORCE INC. ON Thursday formally launched its foray into the outsourcing market outside the mainland United States with Kforce Global Solutions, a "virtual office" that caters to clients in Southeast Asia.

Kforce Global was created with Kforce Inc.'s acquisition of Makati-based Provident Computer Consultants Inc., which specializes in providing outsourcing solutions to companies in a wide range of industries.

Provident started operations in 1997 as a wholly-owned subsidiary of American firm Pinkerton Computer Consultants Inc.

The Tampa, Florida-based Kforce is a professional staffing firm that "provides flexible and permanent staffing solutions for organizations in the skill areas of technology, finance and accounting, and health and life sciences."

According to a Kforce statement, the $1-billion firm has at least 2,000 staffing specialists and operates with 74 offices in North America.

Patrick Moneymaker, Kforce Global chief executive, said during the new subsidiary's launch that management was "extremely excited" about the opportunities provided by the acquisition of Provident.

Moneymaker said the combination of Provident's outsourcing capabilities and Kforce's staffing capability was expected to further accelerate the growth of technology services in Manila.

"The investment in the Philippines is reflective of our confidence in the capability and capacity of the Filipino workforce in responding to the global human capital resource needs, especially in technical areas," he said.

Condotel builder expands project

PACIFIC CONCORD PROPERTIES INC., A developer of residential condominium hotels, said that its Mactan project was now open for rentals and that it had added P75 million worth of new units to take advantage of growing interest in condotels among investors and tourists.

PCPI's Lancaster Cebu Resort Residences, which was launched last March, now has an inventory of 75 suites and 120 units.

Beth Collingz, international marketing director of PLC Global-PCPI's marketing partner, said in a statement that the Lancaster condotel units were available at soft-launch rates to attract budget travelers.

Collingz said Lancaster's immediate market were tourists from Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Singapore, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Kota Kinabalu, Seoul and Qatar, from where there are direct flights to the Cebu International Airport.

PCPI's other projects include the 32-story Lancaster Suites Manila and the 40-story Lancanster Suites Atrium, both being built near the west-side corner of Shaw Boulevard and Edsa in Mandaluyong City. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

CURRENCIES

August 17, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.744934	1.000000	46.5980
Japan	Yen	0.006515	0.008746	0.4075
United Kingdom	Pound	1.477503	1.983400	92.4225
Hongkong	Dollar	0.095273	0.127894	5.9596
Switzerland	Franc	0.612208	0.821828	38.2955
Canada	Dollar	0.691868	0.928764	43.2785
Singapore	Dollar	0.485647	0.651933	30.3788
Australia	Dollar	0.584767	0.784991	36.5790
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.976059	2.652661	123.6087
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.198628	0.266638	12.4248
Brunei	Dollar	0.484070	0.649815	30.2801
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000079	0.000106	0.0049
Thailand	Baht	0.022816	0.030628	1.4272
UAE	Dirham	0.202852	0.272309	12.6891
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.342400	62.5532
Korea	Won	0.000787	0.001057	0.0493
China	Yuan**	0.097966	0.131510	6.1281
Argentina	Peso	0.235367	0.315956	14.7229
Brazil	Real	0.354899	0.476417	22.2001
Denmark	Kroner	0.134379	0.180391	8.4059
India	Rupee	0.018086	0.024278	1.1313
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.212656	0.285470	13.3023
Mexico	New Peso	0.066473	0.089234	4.1581
New Zealand	Dollar	0.506104	0.679394	31.6584
Norway	Kroner	0.124719	0.167423	7.8016
Pakistan	Rupee	0.012333	0.016556	0.7715
South Africa	Rand	0.099505	0.133576	6.2244
Sweden	Kroner	0.106607	0.143109	6.6686
Syria	Pound	0.014535	0.019512	0.9092
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.022488	0.030188	1.4067
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000347	0.000466	0.0217

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Aug. 16, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Aug. 16, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of August 17, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
73	32.5	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	54	55	53	53.5	2,946,900
73.5	51.5	Bank of the Philippine Islands	55.5	56	53	53.5	3,879,100
935	630	China Banking Corp.	805	805	795	800	9,640
23.5	18.5	Citystate Savings Bank	23.25	23.5	23.25	23.5	19,000
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank, Inc	0.37	0.38	0.36	0.36	4,810,000
75.5	36.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	49.5	53	47.5	49	4,330,300
65.5	32.5	Philippine National Bank	42	42.5	41	42	2,566,600
68	41	Philippine Savings Bank	60	60	59.5	59.5	12,100
39.57	14.35	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	24.75	25.5	20.75	20.75	5,632,000
90	47	Security Bank Corp.	65	68.5	65	67	5,500
66	41.54	Union Bank of the Philippines	51	52	50.5	51	772,700
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
1.98	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.66	1.76	1.66	1.74	17,493,000
16.25	1.84	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	9	9.5	8.5	8.9	333,000
1.6	0.4	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.8	0.8	420,000
1,725.00	1,555.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,625.00	1,625.00	1,625.00	1,625.00	300
5	2.95	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	3.05	3.15	2.95	3	3,730,000
3.1	1	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	7,000
1,005.00	219	The Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc	700	715	690	715	19,490
2,250.00	1,945.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,040.00	2,055.00	2,040.00	2,055.00	1,230
1.94	1.3	iVantage Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.3	1.32	1,427,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	4	4.35	3.95	4	27,263,000
0.57	0.23	East Asia Power Resources Corp.	0.25	0.28	0.24	0.28	1,370,000
70	42	First Gen Corp.	56.5	59	56.5	57	2,053,800
92	41	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	70.5	71	69	69	750,400
15	8.7	Manila Water Co. Inc.	12.75	13.25	11.75	11.75	7,269,300
116	15.5	Manila Electric Co. "A"	77.5	81	73.5	74	657,800
118	24.5	Manila Electric Co. "B"	80	82.5	73	76	2,021,800
7	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.1	6.1	6	6	46,234,000
6.5	3.75	Petron Corp.	5.1	5.1	4.45	4.65	11,681,000
14.75	6.7	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7.1	7.4	6.7	6.7	270,000
1.9	0.92	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.08	1.14	1.06	1.06	423,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	2.9	Alaska Milk Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.2	587,000
2.95	1.86	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.86	1.86	391,000
61	31.5	Jollibee Foods Corp.	46.5	49	44	44	2,237,500
8.5	4.6	Pancake House Inc.	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	1,000
1.96	0.78	RFM Corp.	1.44	1.48	1.38	1.38	1,686,000
4.05	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.14	2.14	2.06	2.06	365,000
80	59	San Miguel Corp. "A"	60	62.5	59	59	86,900
88	60	San Miguel Corp. "B"	65	65	60	60	325,300
0.66	0.2	Swift Foods Inc.	0.45	0.47	0.43	0.43	650,000
22	15.25	Universal Robina Corp.	15.5	15.75	15.25	15.25	3,402,000
0.55	0.2	Vitarich Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.26	0.26	250,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	1.57	EEI Corp.	2.85	2.9	2.65	2.85	7,422,000
21.5	6	Federal Chemicals Inc.	9.5	9.5	9	9	1,811,000
9.2	4.5	Holcim Philippines Inc	5.2	5.6	5	5.2	9,177,000
7	1.28	Republic Cement Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	4,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.1	Chemez Technologies Inc.	3.75	4	3.75	3.75	924,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.0775	Picop Resources Inc.	0.31	0.33	0.28	0.28	31,920,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
3.9	1.8	A. Soriano Corp.	3.1	3.1	3	3	30,000
0.17	0.025	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.075	0.08	0.065	0.065	47,500,000
1.28	0.21	APC Group Inc.	0.58	0.6	0.5	0.5	12,150,000
3.6	1.4	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.7	2.9	2.6	2.85	6,584,000
3.35	1.48	ATN Holdings Inc. "B"	2.95	3.35	2.6	3.35	3,094,000
0.018	0.007	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.009	0.009	0.0085	0.0085	123,000,000
9.7	4.85	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.2	6.2	5.8	5.8	6,137,000
0.021	0.0075	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.011	66,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.95	23,642,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	1.68	1.76	1.64	1.66	2,636,000
590	341.67	Ayala Corp.	417.5	427.5	400	402.5	351,250
14.5	7.04	Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	100,000
5.8	1.06	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.4	3.6	10,743,000
10.25	3.25	DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.5	7.5	7.3	7.3	563,000
6.9	1	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.55	3.6	3.4	3.4	182,000
8	2.55	Filinvest Development Corp.	5.9	5.9	5.5	5.8	251,000
14.5	5.6	J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	16,000
11.5	0.33	Multitech Investments Corp.	3.75	4.05	2.7	3.05	3,679,000
8.2	2.7	PAL Holdings Inc.	6	6	5.3	5.3	134,000
0.75	0.17	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.32	0.35	0.31	0.31	9,470,000
2.1	1.2	Republic Glass Holdings Corp.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	42,000
452.5	202.36	SM Investments Corp.	325	325	302.5	312.5	308,050
2.2	0.71	Seafront Resources Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.08	1.08	600,000
0.73	0.125	Sinophil Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.25	0.26	17,940,000
1.06	0.54	Solid Group Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	290,000
23	1	TKC Steel Corp.	14.25	15.5	14.25	15	13,900
0.75	0.1	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.29	0.32	0.29	0.29	2,150,000
		PROPERTY					
2.34	0.78	A Brown Co. Inc.	1.08	1.1	1	1	1,471,000
8.9	6	Anchor Land Holdings, Inc	6	6.2	6	6.2	13,000
1.06	0.32	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.61	0.67	0.57	0.57	1,680,000
19.25	10.83	Ayala Land Inc.	13.75	14	13	13.25	17,936,100
1.88	0.99	Belle Corp.	1.1	1.12	1	1	5,871,000
0.86	0.29	Crown Equities Inc.	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	1,770,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.38	0.38	0.34	0.34	1,640,000
0.99	0.45	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.66	0.67	30,370,000
0.47	0.047	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.185	0.2	0.16	0.16	20,020,000
1.48	0.4	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.99	1	0.93	0.93	6,320,000
2.44	1.07	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.44	1.44	1.32	1.38	97,537,000
0.49	0.1	Gotesco Land Inc. "A"	0.25	0.26	0.23	0.23	720,000
0.5	0.1	Gotesco Land Inc. "B"	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	200,000
3.3	2.16	Highlands Prime Inc.	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	5,000
1.12	0.24	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.5	0.55	0.46	0.46	1,490,000
4.4	1.54	Megaworld Corp.	2.85	2.9	2.7	2.75	93,361,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	20,000
0.7	0.125	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.24	0.24	310,000
0.87	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.38	0.4	0.32	0.34	8,250,000
23	11.75	Robinson Land Corp.	15	15	14.5	14.75	4,144,800
5.9	1.37	SM Development Corp.	3.4	3.45	3.15	3.15	1,991,000
13.5	6.08	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	9.7	9.8	9.3	9.4	26,324,000
3.25	0.8	Shang Properties Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.6	2.7	850,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.53	0.53	0.46	0.47	2,610,000
0.49	0.08	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.215	0.215	6,530,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	4.65	4.75	4.35	4.5	7,980,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	15.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	30	30.5	29.5	29.5	137,200
11.75	8.7	GMA Network Inc.	9	9.2	8.8	8.8	1,343,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.16	1.2	1.1	1.12	5,483,000
1,445.00	970	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,245.00	1,260.00	1,220.00	1,230.00	273,350
2,820.00	1,890.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	2,285.00	2,350.00	2,285.00	2,295.00	302,940
7.9	3.7	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6	6.1	5.8	6	2,749,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.185	0.185	0.17	0.17	5,250,000
12	2	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9	1,000
11.5	2	IPVG Corp.	8.2	8.3	7.6	7.7	1,521,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.033	0.033	0.027	0.027	45,600,000
29.5	7.5	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	14	14	13.5	13.5	5,000
2.9	1.6	Ionics Inc.	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6	300,000
0.32	0.043	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.18	0.185	0.155	0.16	136,170,000
2.08	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.2	1.12	1.2	37,000
0.0725	0.027	PhilWeb Com Inc.	0.045	0.046	0.042	0.044	217,100,000
5.8	1	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l. Inc.	2.36	2.4	2.26	2.4	627,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
1.92	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.4	1.4	1.3	1.4	34,000
6.8	2.95	Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	130,000
34.5	14.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	28.5	28.5	28	28	2,201,800
2.16	0.88	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	80,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
4.25	1.42	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.65	2.7	2.3	2.65	2,130,000
0.98	0.28	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	0.43	0.43	0.38	0.38	3,970,000
1.2	0.42	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.66	0.68	5,300,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.65	iPeople Inc.	2.75	2.75	2.65	2.65	462,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
6	1.9	Macroasia Corp.	4.35	4.6	4.2	4.2	1,659,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	10	10.25	9.8	9.8	252,400
30	9.9	Paxys Inc.	13	13.25	12	12	321,500
		MINING					
0.018	0.0075	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.009	0.0095	0.0085	0.0085	138,000,000
7.6	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	3.75	3.75	3.6	3.75	132,000
7.7	3.85	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	3.85	3.85	3.85	3.85	5,000
21.25	7.6	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	11.5	11.75	10.25	10.5	3,858,300
14.25	8.7	Benguet Corp. "A"	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	17,000
3.1	0.33	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.28	1.34	1.02	1.06	155,349,000
0.35	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.2	0.2	0.18	0.18	12,280,000
0.42	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	1,400,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.019	0.019	0.017	0.018	163,400,000
0.041	0.019	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.02	0.022	0.02	0.02	68,500,000
30	1.2	NiHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	9.9	9.9	7.3	7.3	2,531,000
0.021	0.0079	Omico Corp.	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	378,400,000
6.4	3.15	Philex Mining Corp.	4.85	4.95	4.4	4.5	18,121,000
43	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	25	26.5	25	26	288,100
1.36	0.39	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.81	0.81	0.7	0.7	1,660,000
1.8	0.54	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.1	1.1	1	1	6,502,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.31	0.31	1,630,000
0.025	0.0095	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "A"	0.016	0.016	0.015	0.015	348,100,000
0.027	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. "B"	0.019	0.019	0.017	0.017	62,600,000
0.028	0.0089	The Philodrill Corp.	0.017	0.018	0.015	0.016	551,400,000

AVERAGES			VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	791.76 DOWN	15.02	48,414,860	937,336,765.00
Industrial	3,951.80 DOWN	177.53	161,233,800	1,205,031,675.00
Holding Firms	1,593.25 DOWN	62.87	337,592,300	482,848,895.00
Property	1,310.93 DOWN	39.70	796,224,900	4,171,436,530.00
Service	1,389.63 UP	10.04	433,500,190	1,215,614,370.00
Mining & Oil	4,472.15 DOWN	304.65	1,914,173,400	376,419,400.00
All Shares Index	1,865.22 DOWN	36.64		
PSEI	2,884.34 DOWN	57.97		
		GRAND TOTALS	3,691,139,450	8,388,687,635.00

COMPILED BY SCHATZI QUODALA, INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

Study on RP link to Asean gas pipeline revived

Palawan-Brunei connection may cost at least $3B

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY IS reviving a study on the possibility of connecting to the Trans-Asean Gas Pipeline (TAGP) through a link between Palawan and Brunei.

Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said the plan to connect to the TAGP was still on the table and being studied on the regional level.

"It's being discussed at the Asean level. The easiest way is for us to connect to Brunei via Palawan," he said.

He said that while the country was in the middle of the regional natural gas trade, it would not be able to access imported natural gas if it were not connected to the TAGP.

The DOE is pushing the development of the country's natural gas resources.

Reyes said that at least $5 billion would have to be invested from this year to 2014 to ensure the development of the natural gas sector.

Almost two years ago, at the 8th Asean Council on Petroleum conference, the Malaysia-led TAGP Task Force had agreed to determine the economic viability of the pipeline's different segments.

The volume of gas to be transported via the pipeline network would likewise be studied.

As for the Brunei-Philippine leg, the group would have to determine how economically feasible it would be to undertake it.

Philippine National Oil Co. earlier said it would take more than $3 billion in investment to connect the Philippines to other gas reserves in the Asean region via a gas pipeline linking the Malampaya gas find in Palawan to another gas field in Brunei.

But this was just an estimate, as the only concrete basis for this amount was the cost entailed in establishing the existing gas pipeline connecting the Malampaya gas find to the natural gas-fired power plants in Batangas.

For a pipeline that was about 500 kilometers long, around $1.5 billion was spent several years ago.

The planned Brunei-Palawan pipeline should be around 1,000 kilometers long. Using the cost of the Palawan-Batangas pipeline as a benchmark, the cost of building the Brunei-Palawan pipeline should hit about $3 billion.

This amount might have already increased, however, since the Palawan-Batangas pipeline was established several years ago.

The TAGP project will follow a five-year plan, which prioritizes five gas pipelines for cross-border interconnection: South Sumatra-Peninsular Malaysia, West Natuna-Duyong in Malaysia, East Natuna-Erawan in Thailand, East Natuna-West Natuna-Kerteh in Malaysia and East Natuna West Natuna-Singapore.

REYES

While other components of the TAGP have not been placed under the priority list, these will also be undertaken in the future.

PESO CONTINUES SLIDE
A money changer shows $100 bills as she counts them Friday in Manila. The peso fell versus the US dollar despite what traders say was heavy central bank intervention to stem the local currency's losses. The peso closed at P46.85.

AP

Planned purchase of Napocor assets to cost Aboitizes $1.5B

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE ABOITIZ GROUP WOULD NEED about $1.5 billion for its planned investments in power plants to be sold by the government.

Of the amount, $500 million will be covered by equity or investments by shareholders and the remaining $1 billion will come from borrowings.

The final amount is, however, dependent on whether the Aboitiz group will win the bid for the government's power assets.

AEV chief operating officer Erramon Aboitiz said Aboitiz Power Corp., an AEV firm in charge of investments in power, and its partner SN Power were keen on bidding for the 175 megawatt Ambuklao-Binga hydroelectric power plant in Benguet. The plant may be auctioned off by the end of the year.

Aboitiz Power is also keen on investing in the 190-megawatt Palimpinon geothermal field in Negros Island and the 112-megawatt Tongonan geothermal reservoir in Leyte, which may be sold next year.

He said the group was in talks with International Finance Corp. (of the World Bank), several local banks and a Norwegian lender for loans amounting to $330 million. The amount will be used to partly refinance an obligation incurred to pay for the acquisition of the 360-megawatt Magat hydroelectric plant.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) recently issued the notice of award for the 360-megawatt (MW) Magat hydroelectric power plant in Isabela to SN Aboitiz Power Inc., the joint venture between Aboitiz Power Corp. and SN Power of Norway.

Last December, SN Aboitiz Power submitted the highest bid of $530 million for the power generation facility in Isabela.

Eton moves to boost Ortigas project

ETON PROPERTIES PHILIPPINES INC., the real-estate arm of tycoon Lucio Tan, has teamed up with sister firm Philippine Airlines to entice buyers to its residential offering in Ortigas Center, called the Eton Emerald Lofts.

Under the promo, each home buyer earns 7,500 Mabuhay miles for every P500,000 spent for the acquisition of a unit in Eton Emerald Lofts.

A one-bedroom unit at the 41-storey, twin-tower Eton Emerald Loftscan gives a home buyer at least 30,000 Mabuhay miles.

These miles can get them two round trip tickets economy class tickets to Hong Kong at 15,000 miles per person, or at least three round trip tickets to Cebu at 8,000 miles per person. A two-bedroom unit can earn for a buyer 60,000 miles, enough for a round-trip economy class ticket to Los Angeles.

Excluding surcharges and taxes, a ticket from Manila to Los Angeles costs about $780 during lean seasons, and $1,100 during peak seasons.

Elizabth S. Lacson

Toyota-Metrobank joint venture gets quasi-banking license

By Doris C. Dumlao

TOYOTA FINANCIAL SERVICES Corp. (TFS) Philippines, a joint venture between Toyota Motor Corp. of Japan and the Metrobank group, has obtained a quasi-banking license from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

TFS Philippines is the first institution to get a quasi-banking license since the BSP lifted last February a seven-year moratorium on the granting of such license to investment houses and finance companies.

Now on its fifth year of operations, TFS Philippines is 60-percent owned by the financial services group of Japan's Toyota Motor Corp. and 40-percent by the Metrobank group. It is the second largest financing company in the country.

Nonbank financial institutions with quasi-banking functions are authorized to borrow funds from the public for purposes of relending or purchasing of receivables, but they are not allowed to accept deposits.

Because the banking regulations on affiliate lending, also known as the dosri limit (on directors, officers, stockholders and related interests) were so strict, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. president Arthur Ty said the license would enable TFS to expand its sources of funding.

With this quasi-banking license, TFS is seen being able to offer more competitive car financing terms.

"TFS Philippines will be able to continue fulfilling its corporate responsibility in developing the capital market," said TFS president Dexter Pasion.

Established in 2002, the company has become one of the top performers out of nine TFS group of companies in the Asia-Oceania region, said Hideto Ozaki, president of Toyota Financial Japan.

Ozaki noted that TFS Philippines had doubled its business before reaching five years of operations.

Over the last five years of operations, TFS Philippines has helped about 20,000 customers purchase Toyota cars. With more than 30 percent in average annual growth, its assets reached the P8-billion mark as of the end of its fiscal year 2007.

Filinvest OKs fundraising

THE BOARD OF FILINVEST Development Corp. has approved an equity fundraising plan, which involves primary and secondary offerings of 3.5 million common shares, and the issuance of convertible bonds.

FDC is evaluating its options regarding its fundraising activity—the timing and the feasibility of the bond flotation.

Its stockholders are scheduled to meet on Sept. 7, 2007 to confirm and ratify previous actions of the board, including the fundraising.

FDC, the holding company of the Gotianun group, owns Filinvest Land Inc., Filinvest Alabang Inc. and East West Banking Corp. Recently, FDC acquired full control of Pacific Sugar Holdings Corp.

PSHC owns and manages two sugar mills with a combined milling capacity of 9,000 tons per day. Its expansion program will increase its daily capacity to 15,000 tons, making it the second largest combined milling capacity in the Mindanao region.

PSHC operates one refinery with a 6,000-bag daily capacity. After its ongoing expansion in Davao and the completion of its second refinery by the first quarter of 2008, the two refineries combined will have a daily capacity of 20,500 bags.

FDC posted a net income of P1.6 billion for the first quarter of 2007, or 952 percent higher than year ago's P150 million. It also noted a net extraordinary gain of P1.1 billion from the sale by FAI of its shares in FLI last February.

GOINGS-ON

SMC Pampanga brewery cited

SAN MIGUEL CORP.'S BREWERY IN SAN Fernando, Pampanga was awarded the ecowatch rating of silver by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau Region III.

The award is the second highest recognition accorded to industries with outstanding efforts beyond requirements set by the government in environmental laws. The highest ecowatch rating is gold.

Also awarded were SMFI's poultry processing plant (double green rating) and SMPSI's beverage packaging plant (blue rating). These facilities are in the 104-hectare SMC complex near Barangays Quebiawan and Maimpis.

LBC deploys Avaya solutions

AVAYA INC., A GLOBAL PROVIDER OF BUSINESS communications applications, software and services, said its IP Telephony and contact center solutions were deployed for LBC Express Inc., a provider of 24-hour air cargo delivery service in the country.

The new solutions will facilitate voice and data communications within the 600-strong LBC network in the country and with its partners and customers worldwide. This will enable the firm to maximize efficiency in processing transactions.

LandBank retains CBRE

LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES HAS reappointed CB Richard Ellis Philippines to manage a second round of property auctions beginning September.

"We reappointed CB Richard Ellis because of the encouraging results of the first property auction," said Cecilia D. Sacay, head of LBP special assets division.

Nokia- Microsoft tieup

NOKIA AND MICROSOFT HAVE EXTENDED their cooperation to include support for Microsoft® PlayReady
S60 and Series 40 mobile device platforms.

PlayReady is a new content access technology from Microsoft that makes it easy for content owners and service providers to deliver virtually any type of digital content in a flexible manner.

Peso hits . . .

From page B1

CDOs containing subprime assets in the US. Stock markets also fell to their lowest level since the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in the US.

On the other hand, the Japanese yen rallied as investors pulled out high-yielding assets from emerging markets which were earlier funded by cheap money from Asia's wealthiest nation. But Tetangco said this unwinding of yen carry trade should have very little impact on the Philippines, which was getting much less of such investments compared to countries like Australia and New Zealand.

PASIG RIVER REHABILITATION COMMISSION
5th Floor, DENR Main Building, Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Telephone Nos. +632 929 6626 local 2193 and 2194
Email Address: pasiglahin@yahoo.com.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Republic of the Philippines

Project: Pasig River Environmental Management and Rehabilitation Sector Development Program (PAREMAR)
Loan No.: Asian Development Bank (ADB) Loan No. 1746-PHI
Description of Works: Additional Pontoon Works for P.U.P. Ferry Station

1. The Government of the Philippines (GOP) has received a loan from the ADB toward the cost of PAREMAR and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan, together with the GOP counterpart funds, to payments under the Contract for the Additional Pontoon for P.U.P. Ferry Station.
2. The Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission (PRRC) as the executing agency now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the following contract packages:

Contract Package	Additional Pontoon for P.U.P. Ferry Station
Contract No.	EPA-LPP-055
Location	P.U.P Compound, Sta. Mesa Manila
Contract Duration	75 Calendar Days
Project Description	Additional Pontoon for P.U.P. Ferry Station, which includes the following items of work: General Requirements, Pile Works, Civil Works, Steel Works, Roofing Works, Pontoon Works and Electrical Works.

3. Interested Bidders shall secure the Bid Documents and submit bids as follows:

Activity	Date	Time	Venue
Securing of (a) Eligibility Checklist or (b) submission of Letter of Intent and purchase of complete set of Bid Documents upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 20,000.00	August 21 – August 28 2007	9:00AM to 3:00 PM	5th Floor, DENR Main Building., Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
Securing of additional eligibility information (if any) and inspection of Bidding Documents.	August 21 – August 28 2007	9:00AM to 3:00 PM	5th Floor, DENR Main Building., Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
Deadline for submission of Letter of Intent and Purchase of complete set of Bid Documents	August 28, 2007	3:00 PM	5th Floor, DENR Main Buiding, Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
Site Inspection	August 31, 2007	10:00 PM	P.U.P Compound, Sta. Mesa Manila
Pre-Bid Conference	August 31, 2007	3:00 PM	5th Floor, DENR Main Building., Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
Deadline for Submission of Bids	September 12, 2007	10:00 AM	5th Floor, DENR Main Building., Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
Opening of Bids	September 12, 2007	10:30 AM	5th Floor, DENR Main Building., Visayas Avenue, Quezon City

4. The Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) shall be the implementing agencies of the Project.
5. Bidding will be conducted in accordance with relevant procedures for open competitive bidding as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", to the extent it is consistent with Asian Development Bank's procurement procedures and is open to all Bidders from eligible source countries as defined in *"Guidelines for Procurement Under Asian Development Bank Loans"*.
6. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
7. The Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at anytime prior to Contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders

(Sgd.) ATTY. ZOILO L. ANDIN JR.
Acting Executive Director
Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission
5th Floor, DENR Main Building., Visayas Avenue, Quezon City
Tel. Nos. 433-3447 and 926-5234
Email Address: pasiglahin@yahoo.com.ph
Fax No. 926-5234

(PDI - August 18, 2007)

Philippine Amusement & Gaming Corporation

A Global Corporation with a Global Mindset and a Filipino Heart

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

ITB NO.: 07-10-2007 HM

The Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) is inviting all interested bidders in its forthcoming public bidding for the project stated hereunder.

Name of Project : One (1) Lot 2-year Janitorial Services for Casino Filipino Hyatt Manila
Approved Budget : Twenty Six Million Eighty Seven Thousand Seven Hundred Fifty Two and 80/100 Pesos (P26,087,752.80)
Contract Duration : Two (2) years
Source of Fund : Internally Funded

Only suppliers duly registered with PAGCOR shall be allowed to participate in the bidding. Unregistered suppliers must register at the Suppliers Registration & Evaluation Section (SRES), Procurement & Property Department (PPD), 2nd Floor PAGCOR House, 1330 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila, Tel. No. 526-0573.

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	August 17, 2007 – Sept. 04, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	Aug. 24, 2007 (2:00 pm)
3. Submission of Bids	Sept. 05, 2007 (2:00 pm)
4. Opening of Bids	Sept. 05, 2007 (2:00 pm onwards)

Complete details of the project are indicated in the bid documents which will be available to prospective bidders at the BBAC Secretariat Office, Branch Procurement and Property Office, Casino Filipino Hyatt Manila, MH del Pilar corner Pedro Gil Streets, Malate, Manila upon payment of a non-refundable bidding fee of **Thirteen Thousand Forty Three & 88/100 Pesos (Php13,043.88)**. In order to secure the documents, bidders should present the Official Receipt issued by our Cashier to the BBAC Secretariat.

PAGCOR assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

PAGCOR reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

Please address all communications to the BBAC Secretariat Unit, Branch Procurement & Property Office, Casino Filipino Hyatt Manila, MH del Pilar corner Pedro Gil Streets, Malate, Manila, Tel. No.: 247-1743.

(Sgd.) **ABM HILARIO T. MANALIGOD**
Chairperson, BBAC Hyatt Manila

(PDI–August 18, 2007)

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **SOLID DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** with office address located at **1927 Jorge Bocobo Street, Malate, Manila** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as an **Expanding Export Producer of Spun Yarn** on a **Non-Pioneer Status** with a capacity of **10,000 spindles per year** with project site to be located at **Mataas na Parang, San Ildefonso, Bulacan.**

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI--Aug. 18, 2007)

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **GREAT POLARIS TEXTILE MILLS, INC.** with office/site address located at **JI Warehouse, J.Y. Compound, Veterans Industrial Center, Taguig City** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as **New Export Producer of Knitted Fabrics** with a capacity of **3,226,080 kilos/year** on a **Non-Pioneer Status.**

Any person with valid operations on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this application.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI--Aug. 18, 2007)

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **BASICWEAR EXPORT, INC.** with office/site address located at **Sto. Tomas, Sta. Maria, Bulacan** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as **New Export Producer of Knitted Fabrics** on a **Non-Pioneer Status** with a capacity of **1,965,600 kilograms per year.**

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI--Aug. 18, 2007)

Philippine International Trading Corporation

PITC

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE IMPORTATION OF PREMIUM, FANCY AND/OR GLUTINOUS RICE

The Philippine International Trading Corporation (PITC) invites all interested Farmers Cooperatives / Groups / Associations / Private Rice Traders with valid and updated 2007 **NFA License to Import** to submit Letters of Intent (LOIs) on or before 31 August 2007 for the Importation of 10,000 MT Premium, Fancy and/ or Glutinous Rice to arrive not later than 31 December 2007.

Minimum volume to be allocated per qualified participant shall be 500 MT but not to exceed 1,000 MT. Should the total quantity received from LOIs submitted exceed 10,000 MT, the allocation per importer shall be adjusted on a pro-rata basis.

The Terms of Reference and Guidelines / Mechanics will be available for issuance during office hours starting 21 August 2007, weekdays only, from Imports Department at the 10th Floor NDC Building, 116 Tordesillas Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City and with telephone nos. 892-1560, 892-1627, and 818-9801 locals 421, 327 and 334.

(Sgd.) **MARIO M LEYGO**
Vice President, Trading Group

(PDI--Aug. 18, 2007)

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Notice is hereby given that the estates of Spouses Amando H. Carbonell who died on Aug. 30, 1998 and Augustina Lanting Carbonell who died on July 24, 1973 has been settled extrajudicially under deed of extrajudicial settlement last Aug. 13, 2007 under Doc. 031, Page 08 Book XVIII of the Notarial Register of Notary Public Atty Cesar M. Lao of Antipolo City Province of Rizal.

(PDI-Aug. 18, 25 & Sept. 1, 2007)

SEARCH COMMITTEE FOR THE PRESIDENCY of the VISAYAS STATE UNIVERSITY

Minimum Personal Qualifications:

1. Preferably be at least thirty-five (35) years old but not more than sixty (60) years old on the deadline for the submission of applications for the position.
2. Must be a Filipino citizen to include any person who may have become a naturalized citizen of another country but has been able to acquire dual-citizenship.
3. Must be a holder of an earned Doctorate degree.
4. Must have a proven track record as top administrator in academic field such as President, Vice-President and Campus Director, whether public or private tertiary educational institution, for the period of three (3) years. These must be supported by documents (e.g. Certification or Special Order from the concerned party) stating the managerial, professorial and/or administrative experience and the period covered.
5. Must possess leadership in school administration and managerial skills within the purview of the needs, thrusts, goals and objectives of the University.
6. Must be of good moral character.
7. Must not have been convicted of any crime involving moral turpitude or of any administrative charge.

Note: *Qualified applicants are requested to submit all the required clearances on or before the deadline. Failure to submit all clearances by then will mean forfeiture of the application.*

1. Formal Application Letter addressed to:
   Hon. NONA S. RICAFORT PhD.
   Chairperson, VSU Board of Regents
   Visayas State University
   Visca, Baybay, Leyte
2. Curriculum Vitae with authenticated / certified supporting documents.
3. Applicant's Proposed Vision, Mission, and thrusts for the College/University
4. Neuro-psychiatric Examination Result accomplished by a government physician as recommended by the Search Committee.
5. Medical Certificate of Physical Fitness issued by a government physician
6. Clearance Certificates (original) from the following:
   a. Ombudsman or Sandiganbayan *(Note: Pending Case not a clearance)*
   b. Civil Service Commission
   c. National Bureau of Investigation
7. Accomplished CSC Form 212, under oath
8. Statement of Assets and Liabilities as of Year 2006

Important: Interested applicants must send the above mentioned documentary requirements in seven (7) sets/copies on or before **15 September 2007** to any of the following:

Chair of the Search Committee OR
Visayas State University
Visca, City of Baybay, Leyte
Attention: **DANIEL M. TUDTUD, JR.**
Board Secretary

Hon. Nona S. Ricafort
Commissioner
5th Floor, DAP Bldg.
Commission on Higher Education
San Miguel Ave., Ortigas, Pasig City
Attention: **IMELDA G. CALVO**
Executive Assistant

(PDI – August 17, 18 & 19, 2007)

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II. CV Anesthesia Division
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III. Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery Division
4 years Residency in General Surgery accredited by PCS (Board eligible)

RESIDENCIES: (For Medical Board Passers)

I. Nuclear Medicine Division
II. Biological & Clinical Laboratory Division
III. CV Radiological Sciences Division
IV. 1 Year Fellowship Program
1. Radiology
2. Nuclear Medicine
3. Biological & Clinical Laboratory

- Deadline for submission of application is on August 31, 2007
- Academic Year 2008 starts on January 1, 2008

General Requirements:

1. Medical Diploma
2. Transcript of Records with the General Weighted Average
3. Itemized Board Rating
4. Three (3) Letters of Recommendation with at least one letter written by the Training Officer and/or Director of the previous Training Programs (duplicate letters or photocopies will not be accepted)
5. Four (4) pcs. 2"x2" colored picture.

Please address your communications to:

ARISTIDES G. PANLILIO, M.D.
Department Manager II
The Department of Education, Training and Research
Philippine Heart Center, East Avenue, Quezon City

For further inquiries, please contact Ms. Carmela O. Rivera or Ms. Cleopatra Q. Palencia with Tel. Nos. 925-2401 locals 3234, 3235, 3236 & 3237 and Telefax 926-9622, or you can email to oer@phc.gov.ph

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OBITUARIES

DEATH NOTICES

ELVITA S. CUYUGAN

Died in the grace of our Lord on July 29, 2007 in Chicago, Illinois.

Her cremains was flown to Manila last August 15, 2007 and is now transferred to San Carlos City, Pangasinan for viewing.

Inurnment will be on August 19, 2007 at 9:00 a.m.

In Loving Memory on the 3rd Death Anniversary of

Angeli A. Alejo

who died August 25, 2004.

The family requests relatives and friends to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Notify family and friends of a loved one who had just passed away.

We accept death notices, announcing details of the person's wake and interment. For a very affordable fee you can reach out to everyone who have been a part of the life of your dearly departed. For more information, you may contact Inquirer Classifieds at (02)897 8425.

Our Dearly Beloved

ELENA JAVATE-COZZITORTO

July 31, 1948 - August 12, 2007

Her loving husband **JOSEPH**; children **JASON** and **ERIC**; mother **PAULITA**; sisters **PERLA, AURORA, LUZ, VICTORIA, JOSELITA**, and brother **JOSE Jr.**; brothers-in-law **ANGELITO, AMIR, PAUL**, and **SAL**; sisters-in-law **MARYANN** and **MYLENE**; her nephews, nieces, cousins, uncles, aunts, and friends in the United States and the Philippines, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

The viewing will be held on Friday, August 17, 2007, at M.J. Murphy Funeral Home, 616 Ridge Road, New Road, Monmouth Junction, New Jersey, between the hours of 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 - 9:00 a.m.

The funeral of Christian Burial will be celebrated 10:15 a.m., August 18, Saturday at the St. Augustine of Canterbury Church, 45 Henderson Road, Kendall Park, New Jersey.

Burial will follow at Holy Cross Burial Park, Cranbury South River Road, Jamesburg, New Jersey.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Ellen's memory to advance research in pancreatic cancer at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, 1275 York Avenue, New York and Fox Chase Cancer Center, 333 Cottman Avenue, Philadelphia, USA.

"The Lord is my Shepherd I shall not want in green pastures He leads me."

Ludivina "Ning" Samson De Padua

U.P. Professor Emeritus

Died in the Grace of Our Lord on August 16, 2007.

Her husband Dante;
her children Lizbeth, Dan Albert & Elaine, John David & Maria Eloisa, Victor & Hazel, and Donald Daniel & Kristina;
her grandchildren Deirdre, David, Anton, Mikael, Jonathan, Christina, James and Bianca;
her brothers and sisters Walfredo (†) & Rosie, Sonny & Nene, Pom & Jun, Chi & Poy, and Edgardo & Gina;
and her nephews and nieces
request the pious reader to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Resurrection Chapel, St. Therese Church, U.P. Los Baños.

Interment will be on Tuesday, August 21, after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR IMMEDIATE HIRING

GRAPHIC ARTISTS

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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **PRIMA MODAS INC.** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as an **Expanding Export Producer of Garments** with a capacity of 10,000 doz/year on a **Non Pioneer Status** with project/plant site located at #886 J. Aguilar St., CAA Road, Las Piñas City.

Any person with valid objections on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI--Aug. 18, 2007)

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NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Philippines Sugar Center Bldg., North Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (02) 454-0254
Website: www.nfa.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Supply and Delivery of Security Appliance/Firewall and Anti Virus Licenses

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)*, through its *2007 Corporate Operating Budget* intends to apply the sum of *P5,200,000.00* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *supply and delivery of Security Appliance/Firewall and Anti-Virus Licenses*, as follows:

Lot No.	Particulars	No. of Units	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
1	Security Appliance/Firewall	40	3,200,000.00
2	Anti-Virus Licenses	2,000	2,000,000.00
	TOTAL		5,200,000.00

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The *NFA* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the *supply and delivery of Personal and Notebook Computers*. Delivery is required within 60 calendar days from receipt of notarized contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **Instruction to Bidders (ITB)**.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *NFA-BAC SECRETARIAT* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.*

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of P7,500.00 in the form of *CASH*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The following activities shall be conducted at the *NFA Board Room, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City.*

a) Pre-Bid Conference - September 4, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.
b) Bid Submission and Opening - September 18, 2007
Submission of Bids - 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
Opening of Bids - 2:00 p.m.

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Required Amount in Percent of ABC
Cash, cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
Surety Bond stamped "Callable on Demand" on the face of the Bond issued by GSIS	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Any combination of the above	Proportionate to share

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

The *NFA* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procuring Entity - *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY*
Contact Person - *Jose D. Chua / Violeta S. Villarama*
Address - *Philsugin Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City*
Telephone/Fax No. - *(632) 455-2758*
Mobile Phone - *(928) 4102732*
e-mail address - *vsvillarama@nfa.gov.ph*
Website - *www.nfa.gov.ph*

(Sgd.) **PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.**
Deputy Administrator and BAC Chair for Administration and General Support Services

(PDI - Aug. 18, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Office of the President
HOUSING AND LAND USE REGULATORY BOARD
Cordillera Administrative Region
Botanical Garden, Leonard Wood Road, Baguio City
Tel. No. 442-5338

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **MILLER C. TANGUILAN, Officer-In-Charge, Northern Luzon Area, HOME GUARANTY CORPORATION**, has filed with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board a sworn registration statement for the sale of commercial lots at the **PINESVILLE COMMERCIAL SUBDIVISION** located along Baguio-Balatoc-Philex Mines Road, Kias Barangay, Baguio City, covered by Lot 26, Block 14, Psd-CAR-001483 / TCT No. 56850; and that the registration statement and all papers attached thereto are available for inspection during business hours by any person having legal interest thereon; and that upon proper application, copies thereof shall be furnished to such person upon payment of the proper fee.

Any person with valid objection in the registration of the project may file his/her objection in writing with the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board, Botanical Garden, Leonard Wood Road, Baguio City, not later than fifteen (15) days from the date of the last publication.

City of Baguio, Philippines, 01st day of August 2007.

(Sgd.) **REBECCA F. TORRES**
Regional Officer

(PDI -- August 11 & 18, 2007)

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More Classified Ads

Pasig River Rehabilitation B3
Department of Labor-NCR B6
National Food Authority B6

Gov't expects P37B from sale of stake in PNOC-EDC

Move to keep budget deficit within P63-B ceiling for 2007

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT EXPECTS to raise P37 billion from a plan to sell its remaining 40-percent stake in Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC).

Teves said there were several investors who have expressed interest in buying the government's equity in PNOC-EDC, but he declined to identify them.

The finance chief said that considering the required administrative tasks, the government would likely be able to sell the asset in late October or early November.

Under the worst-case fiscal scenario projected by the Department of Finance, wherein the bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs would not be able to recover from their revenue tax collection shortfalls in the first half, the government would still be able to keep its deficit within the target of P63 billion partly because of the expected proceeds from the sale of PNOC-EDC.

In July, the government sold 20 percent of its stake in PNOC-EDC after it sold another 20 percent through an initial public offering last year.

The sale in July yielded P17.1 billion in additional revenues, of which P15 billion went to state coffers and the rest to PNOC. The parent firm could have kept the entire privatization proceeds, but the national government asked it to contribute bulk of the revenue to state coffers to help plug the deficit.

The incremental revenues for the national government helped it post a budget surplus of P1.6 billion in July and slightly recover from a poor fiscal performance in the first half. *(See story on Page B1.)*

"We can easily dispose of it because of the interest among investors," Teves said. He said it was practical for the government to focus its privatization efforts on PNOC-EDC because it had a higher probability of being sold within the year than other state-owned assets.

The government is also selling its 24-percent stake in San Miguel Corp., but the DOF said it could not yet say whether it could be sold soon because it was still in the middle of discussions with farmers on the use and disbursement of proceeds from a sale.

Teves said newly appointed Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes was given the courtesy of first reviewing the revenue potentials of the state-owned asset before the sale is actually made.

PNOC-EDC, established in 1976, is engaged in the business of exploring, developing, utilizing and marketing geothermal and other viable energy resources, and sells steam to the state-owned National Power Corp.

The government has adopted the policy of selling state-owned assets that are deemed better run by the private sector so that delivery of services would be more efficient and for the government to rid itself of the financial burden entailed in operating such assets.

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
PHILIPPINE CULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL INC. 1253 J. Abad Santos Ave., Tondo, Manila	Lirong Jiang	Mandarin Language Teacher
PHILIPPINE CULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL INC. 1253 J. Abad Santos Ave., Tondo, Manila	Xuefang Huang	Mandarin Language Teacher
PHILIPPINE CULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL INC. 1253 J. Abad Santos Ave., Tondo, Manila	Youlan Dai	Mandarin Language Teacher
CATALYST-MICROFINANCE INVESTORS PHILIPPINES INC. 15/F Strata 2000 Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Md. Nahid Khan	Treasurer
CATALYST-MICROFINANCE INVESTORS PHILIPPINES INC. 15/F Strata 2000 Bldg., F. Ortigas Jr. Rd., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Tim Fakruzzaman	Vice-President
JUST TEXTILE FINISHING CORP. 54 Int. Kaingin Rd., Balintawak, Quezon City	Yiming Fu	Mechanical Consultant
JUST TEXTILE FINISHING CORP. 54 Int. Kaingin Rd., Balintawak, Quezon City	Ranxia He	Technical Consultant
GLAXOSMITHKLINE PHILIPPINES, INC. 2266 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Robert Arifin	Head, Consumer Healthcare Indonesia and Philippines
FM TOWN PH CORP. 820 Club Floor, West Burgundy Tower, Malate, Manila	Jung Woo Kim	Finance Manager
SOL SEAFOOD PHILKOR RESTAURANT CORP. HK Sun Plaza, Macapagal Ave., Pasay City	Cheolwon Lee	Executive Chef
MCGERRY'S RESTAURANT 823 Ongpin St., Sta. Cruz, Manila	Changjian Xu	Chief Cook
BU JA JIP RESTAURANT CO. 37 Matalino St., Central, District 4, Quezon City	Eunhee Kweon	Supervisor
IBM DAKSH BUSINESS PROCESS SERVICES PHILIPPINES INCORPORATED 30/F PBCom Tower, 6795 Ayala Avenue, Makati City	Kathleen Tara Mc Mahon	Vendor Manager III
AMERICAN CHATLINK, INC. Unit 1210 Tycoon Centre, Pearl Drive, Ortigas, Pasig City	Amelita Abeng-Revilla	Treasurer
SEHYUN DEVELOPMENT INC. 1901 Antel 2000 Corporate Ctr., 121 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Sungwoo Rim	Marketing Manager
BASE CAMP INTERNATIONAL TOUR INC. Unit 704-C 1129 Concepcion St., Ermita, Manila	Kyung Hwan Mo	Director
OFFSHORE CAD & MANAGEMENT INC. 6C Abba II Bldg. 5756 Kalayaan Ave., Pinagkaisahan, Makati City	Shusei Hayashi	President
SAN-SUNG RESTAURANT 7830 Makati Avenue, Makati City	Jae Youl Jeoung	General Manager
TOURCODE-BLUE TRAVEL LINE INC. U-1003 10/F Marbella Condominium I, Roxas Blvd., Pasay City	Daewean Shin	Chief Operation Officer
KYUNGHEE ENTERPRISE INC. 1547 Adriatico St., Ermita, Manila	Yong Jin Choi	General Manager
TOURCODE-BLUE TRAVEL LINE INC. Unit 1003 10/F Marbella I Condominium, 2223 Roxas Blvd., Pasay City	Min Jung Kim	Treasurer/General Manager
EEP PHONE ENGLISH SYSTEM, INC. 1040 EDSA Magallanes, Makati City	Byoungzoo Lim	President

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC-Regional Director

The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.

(PDI - August 18, 2007)

EFFICIENCY TO CUT COSTS

Aboitiz group urges port privatization

By Riza T. Olchondra

MORE THAN TRYING TO LOWER shipping costs, the government should focus on privatizing and modernizing the country's major ports as soon as possible, said Xavier Aboitiz, vice president at Aboitiz and Co.

"With modernization, we (port users) can expect an overall lowering of costs, though not necessarily with respect to tariffs," Aboitiz told reporters on Thursday night.

He said the cost of transport was not just made up of the price of the tariff or the cost of the ships, but also the delays and inefficiencies in outdated ports.

Aboitiz added that even if investments in modernization translated to an increase in tariffs or the price of services such as cargo handling, the increased efficiency would more than cushion the impact.

He added that the increased efficiency would complement the beneficial effects of the roll-on roll-off (RoRo) system.

A report by the government's Task Force on Infrastructure Monitoring said the RoRo introduced in the Philippines' so-called western nautical highway or Western Seaboard has cut transportation costs in serviced areas by 45 percent and jumpstarted tourism and commercial growth in the places surrounding the facilities.

Passenger fares alone were reduced by 32 percent. The report said that before RoRo, passengers had no choices in inter-island travel and fares averaged at P220 a person. In comparison, RoRo fares averaged P150, resulting in average savings of P70 or 32 percent of the traditional cost.

The biggest transport savings were seen in the shipment of motorcycles from Metro Manila to the provinces. A shipment of 50 motorcycles used to cost P95,000 via traditional shipping, but deliveries using the RoRo system cost only P50,000 or 47-percent cheaper, giving companies a viable alternative in transporting their products.

Data from the Department of Tourism, meanwhile, showed that the RoRo system boosted domestic tourism' between 2003 and 2005. Dumaguete recorded an 8-percent jump in tourist arrivals to 147,000 in 2005 from 136,000 in 2003, attributed mainly to RoRo users. Bacolod posted an 11-percent increase to 228,000 from 205,000, while Caticlan saw a 47-percent jump to 380,000 from 215,000. Iloilo recorded a 77-percent jump in arrivals in the same two-year period to 499,000 from 339,000.

"The more important effect of modern ports is efficiency. If a shipper can get his ship to sail in three hours instead of 12, that will help him maximize the cost of shipping, the cost of trucks, cargo handling, and so on. The effect is widespread," Aboitiz said.

WESM operator to improve surveillance system

By Abigail L. Ho

TO PREVENT WHOLESALE electricity spot market (WESM) participants from engaging in anti-competitive practices, market operator Philippine Electricity Market Corp. will be beefing up its surveillance and monitoring activities.

In his report on the electricity bourse's first year in operation, PEMC president Lasse Holopainen said that one of PEMC's priorities was the establishment of a system and procedures for the detection, at close to real-time, of "abnormal market outcomes."

The new system, he said, would enable PEMC to determine specific anti-competitive behaviors or exercise of market power.

PEMC also aimed to improve its surveillance tools and monitoring to ensure the efficiency and competitiveness of the market, he said.

The market operator's "financial penalty manual" would likewise be revised in consultation with industry stakeholders, he added.

PEMC's market surveillance committee (MSC) last year found the state-run Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. guilty of anti-competitive behavior and of abusing its market power at the WESM, causing prices to suddenly spike during the Aug. 26-Sept. 25 trading month.

Following deliberations, it was determined that PSALM, with its four trading teams and control over half of the electricity traded on the spot market, had indeed abused its market power during peak hours of that trading month.

The MSC said PSALM made "offers of unusually high, similar price bids on the third month of the WESM's market operation."

Due to the spike in WESM prices that month, consumers were almost subjected to higher generation charges, if not for PEMC's implementation of administered prices for that month, which were even lower than the time-of-use rates of National Power Corp.

The Energy Regulatory Commission, however, pending its own investigation, brought prices at a level at par with Napocor's TOU rates.

The regulatory body later on cleared PSALM of price manipulation charges, saying it found no prima facie evidence to start its own investigation on the matter.

This prompted PSALM to demand payment of almost P9 billion from power buyers on the electricity bourse.

The total amount PSALM is demanding represented the peso difference between the actual payments for energy traded in the third and fourth billing months (close to P6.7 billion) and the amount actually due to PSALM based on the market clearing prices (P13.8 billion), plus the corresponding value-added tax (almost P1.2 billion) and interest based on Napocor's non-prime lending rate (P606.4 million).

Luzon power users should brace themselves for an additional charge of P2.60 per kilowatt-hour if the PSALM succeeds in collecting this amount.

NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Philippine Sugar Center Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City
Tel. No. (02) 454-0254 • Website www.nfa.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
Supply and Delivery of Electric Generator and Refrigerant Recovery Machine

The *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY (NFA)*, through its *2007 Corporate Operating Budget* intends to apply the sum of *P800,000.00* being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for *supply and delivery of Electric Generator and Refrigerant Recovery Machine*, as follows:

Lot No.	Particulars	No. of Units	Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)
1	Electric Generator	2	360,000.00
2	Refrigerant Recovery Machine	1	440,000.00
	TOTAL		800,000.00

Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.

The *NFA* now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the *supply and delivery of Personal and Notebook Computers*. Delivery is required within 60 calendar days from receipt of notarized contract. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, Instruction to Bidders (ITB).

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

Interested Bidders may obtain further information from the *NFA-BAC SECRETARIAT* and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from *8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.*

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of P2,000.00 in the form of *CASH*. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.

The following activities shall be conducted at the *NFA Board Room, 6th floor, Philsugin Bldg., North Avenue, Quezon City.*

a) Pre-Bid Conference – September 3, 2007 at 2:00 p.m.
b) Bid Submission and Opening – September 17, 2007
Submission of Bids – 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m.
Opening of Bids - 2:00 p.m.

All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the following form and amount.

Form of Security	Required Amount in Percent of ABC
Cash, cashier's Check, Manager's Check, Bank draft or Irrevocable Letter of Credit	One percent (1%)
Bank Guarantee	One and a half percent (1.5%)
Surety Bond stamped "Callable on Demand" on the face of the Bond issued by GSIS	Two and a half percent (2.5%)
Any combination of the above	Proportionate to share

Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives.

The *NFA* reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Procuring Entity - *NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY*
Contact Person - *Jose D. Chua / Violeta S. Villarama*
Address - *Philsugin Bldg., North Ave., Diliman, Quezon City*
Telephone/Fax No. - *(632) 455-2758*
Mobile Phone - *(928) 4102732*
e-mail address - *vsvillarama@nfa.gov.ph*
Website - *www.nfa.gov.ph*

(Sgd.) PEDRO S. HERNANDO, JR.
Deputy Administrator and BAC Chair
for Administration and General Support Services

(PDI – August 18, 2007)

Gov't posts . . .

From page B1

The seven-month deficit also trimmed the deficit of P41 billion recorded as of end-June.

Due to shortfalls in revenue collection by the Bureaus of Internal Revenue and of Customs, the budget gap in the first half breached the P31.3-billion ceiling set for the period. This raised concerns that the government might post a full-year deficit higher than the P63-billion target.

"We were fortunate in July because of the proceeds of the sale of PNOC-EDC that contributed to overall revenues," Teves said. He was referring to the sale of another 20 percent of the government's remaining stake in Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. that generated P15 billion for the national government.

Of the P104 billion in revenues in July, P58.7 billion was accounted for by taxes collected by the BIR. The tax agency's collections surpassed its target of P57.8 billion for the month, making the BIR slightly recover from its shortfall in the first six months.

Tax collections in the July brought the BIR's total revenues in the first seven months to 393.4 billion. The BIR is tasked to collect P765.8 billion for the entire year.

The Bureau of Customs accounted for P20.8 billion of total revenue collections, surpassing its goal of P19.86 billion for the month after a similar dismal performance in the first half. This brought the BOC's seven-month collection to P113 billion. The BOC is tasked to collect P228.2 billion for the entire year.

The Bureau of the Treasury, which collects dividends from state-owned firms, contributed P5.4 billion to total revenues. Other government offices collected P19.1 billion.

Government expenditures of P102.4 billion in July were lower by P5.7 billion than the P108.1 billion programmed for the month. The lower-than-budget spending for the month was largely due to savings from interest payments.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said the rate for the 91-day treasury bills averaged at 3.16 percent in the first seven months compared with the 4-5 percent assumed when officials were crafting the 2007 national budget.

According to estimates by the DOF, the national government will post a deficit of only P13 billion under a best-case scenario, P33 billion under a medium-case scenario, and P63 billion under the worst-case scenario.

Finance officials said the targeted privatization of more state assets in the remaining months of the year would compensate for the shortfalls in tax collection in the first half.

But economists cautioned that a single month's performance did not make a trend. They said turbulence on global markets could trip up the government's plans to raise up to P45 billion from the sale of government assets between August and the end of the year.

"Looking at what is happening on the region, in the global markets everything has been put on hold as far as M&A is concerned, so I am not sure how the Philippines is going to push through with it," Patricia Lui, managing analyst with Informa Global Markets, said. ***With a report from Reuters***

State-of-the-heart technology

CUTTING-EDGE HEALTH CARE

Christine F. Liwanag

WORKING IN THE HOSPITAL INDUSTRY is very challenging. With patients' lives on the line, the stakes are high. You need to take your job seriously, especially if you work for a hospital with a culture of perfection and a boss, Jose F. G. Ledesma, who is a staunch advocate of patient safety. This overriding concern for patient care and safety is what drives St. Luke's Medical Center to aggressively acquire state-of-the-art medical equipment, continuously develop medical expertise, and constantly monitor healthcare outcomes.

The renowned heart specialist with the kindest of hearts, Dr. Homobono B. Calleja, was instrumental in establishing St. Luke's Heart Institute. The Heart Institute, the Philippines' first private cardiac facility and the model for St. Luke's other Centers of Excellence, is one of Dr. Calleja's lasting legacies to Filipino patients with cardiovascular diseases. Twenty-one years after it was established, the Heart Institute, now under the able stewardship of Dr. Antonio Sibulo Jr., has provided hundreds of thousands of patients with the best and most up-to-date treatment modalities.

Constant monitoring

St. Luke's puts a high premium on constant monitoring of quality of care outcomes. Every Tuesday afternoon, St. Luke's medical director Dr. Joven Cuanang convenes the Hospital Performance Improvement Council and meets with the hospital's medical and administrative heads to ensure that all St. Luke's patients receive optimal care that results in the best possible treatment outcomes.

We are grateful that our efforts at raising the bar of patient care have not gone unnoticed. In November 2003, St. Luke's Medical Center became the first hospital in the Philippines and only the second of 26 in Asia to be accredited by Joint Commission International (JCI), the world's most prestigious healthcare accreditation body. Three years later, JCI officially granted reaccreditation to St. Luke's, making it the first hospital in the Philippines and only the second in Asia to receive JCI reaccreditation.

"Thank you for saving the life of my husband," said President Macapagal-Arroyo in her keynote speech during the Heart Institute's 21st anniversary celebration.

Cardiovascular, surgical experts

President Arroyo thanked Dr. Juliet Gopez-Cervantes who after a thorough examination concluded that the First Gentleman's problem was a serious heart condition and not a simple gastrointestinal one, as initially suspected. She also thanked the Heart Institute's team of cardiovascular surgical specialists headed by Dr. Rommel Cariño

"You brought my husband back from the brink of death," said the President.

In April 2007, the First Gentleman Miguel Arroyo underwent high-risk open-heart surgery to repair a large tear in his aorta. The 10-hour operation required the significant lowering of Mr. Arroyo's body temperature to prevent organ damage and the temporary stoppage of the blood circulation to his entire body to enable his multidisciplinary team of cardiovascular and surgical experts to perform the life-saving operation.

The President proudly announced that four months after undergoing risky open-heart operation, the First Gentleman now plays 18 holes of golf. "When I left Malacañang this morning, he was on his treadmill." Thanks to the advice of doctors at the Heart Institute, the First Gentleman has put together and is implementing a personalized healthy lifestyle regimen, she added.

Better equipped

President Arroyo noted that St. Luke's is better equipped than 95 percent of US hospitals. "I know that St. Luke's was the first hospital in Southeast Asia and the only one in the Philippines to acquire a PET scanner. Typically six American hospitals share one PET scanner ... but you have your own exclusive machine which I had the privilege of using during my executive checkup."

In his opening remarks during the anniversary celebration, St. Luke's president and CEO Jose F. G. Ledesma lauded the Heart Institute's staff for performing open-heart surgeries and coronary angioplasty and stenting with a 99 percent success rate, which is comparable with that of the world's best medical centers.

Maintaining info system

Ledesma also congratulated Dr. Fabio Enrique Posas, chief of the Section of Interventional Cardiology and chair of the Cardiovascular Research Unit, for maintaining the country's first and only Cardiovascular Disease Information System (CVDIS), which collects clinical and procedure-specific information from all patient encounters at the Institute starting 2005.

As of June 2007, the system has compiled 117,347 procedural records of 60,588 patients, with the ultimate goal of providing quality-controlled cardiovascular care that is safe, effective, efficient and timely.

"The 'state-of-the-heart' technology at St. Luke's Quezon City will also be available in St. Luke's Bonifacio Global City," Ledesma said.

To increase public awareness on and understanding of the benefits of technology and its role in medical care, "Cutting-Edge Healthcare" is working with the Healthcare Technology and Outcomes Information Bureau headed by veteran broadcaster Angelo Palmones. The bureau also aims to inform and update the medical community and members of the media about the latest medical technologies and how these help improve healthcare.

* * *

Christine F. Liwanag is the senior vice president for Strategic Marketing and Corporate Affairs of St. Luke's Medical Center. For inquiries, please e-mail the Healthcare Technology and Outcomes Information Bureau at inquire@thoib.com.

With antiretrovirals, couples with HIV can have virus-free kids

By Jocelyn R. Uy

FROM A PHOTO IN HIS laptop, two little blonde girls in their colorful Sunday dress beamed back at Rev. Christo Greyling, a South African who has been living with HIV for two decades now.

The girls are his daughters and they are virus-free, the 43-year-old pastor revealed.

"Yes, it can be done," said Greyling, a global HIV and AIDS adviser who was in Manila recently to give workshops during the four-day launch of an awareness program of the World Vision Development Foundation-Philippines on the virus.

Thanks to the works of science, couples living with HIV (or either one of them) are given the chance of bearing virus-free children and living a normal family life.

Antiretrovirals

Greyling resorted to antiretroviral (ARV) drugs that lower one's viral load to undetectable levels, allowing him to father two healthy children without infecting his wife, Liesl, who remains HIV-free up to now.

Usually, ARV drugs are prescribed to those who are in the late stages of HIV inception, according to Dr. Jose Gerard Belimac, manager of the National AIDS program of the Department of Health Infectious Disease Office.

"Not all people living with HIV are to immediately undergo this kind of treatment. Normally, this is prescribed to those who are on Stage 3 or Stage 4 of HIV," Belimac told the INQUIRER in a phone interview.

But in Greyling's case, he chose to undergo ARV treatment five years ago despite a relatively sound immune system to bear children without getting his wife infected, he explained.

"At that stage, I could have gone two more years without needing ARV treatment but we wanted to have children and we couldn't wait any longer [considering our age]," he said.

Infected

Greyling, a hemophiliac, contracted HIV during an eye surgery in 1984. He was infused with the blood concentrate he needed to prevent profuse bleeding during the operation.

According to him, the concentrate turned out to be contaminated. He only learned he was infected in 1987. He was 23 and was to marry Liesl in six months.

In 1998 or 10 years after they got married, the couple encountered a research study showing that when a person with HIV started ARV therapy, the chances of infecting his or her partner during unprotected sex were reduced tremendously.

Other studies also revealed that the viral load in the blood is lowered to undetectable levels after three months of ARV treatment and in the semen in the next three months.

Suddenly, the husband and wife began to imagine the life they had been dreaming about before Greyling was told the bad news—having children to love and care for.

"Based on the research, we started to realize that if I would go into ARV and get the viral load to undetectable levels, then there would be a very low chance of infecting Liesl during limited exposure to unprotected sex," Greyling said.

It took the couple five more years to finally trust these studies and put them into action. This was after they have pored over every study on the matter, read similar articles on the Internet and consulted with fertility and HIV specialists, they said.

2 HIV-free kids

In 2003, on the sixth month of Greyling's ARV therapy and at Liesl's most fertile time, the couple engaged in their very first unprotected sex. Luckily, she got pregnant with their first baby, Anika, and stayed HIV negative.

Two years later, Liesl gave birth to another baby girl, Mia. Both girls are HIV-free.

"Our story [shows] that it is possible for a couple, where one of the partners is HIV positive, to be able to conceive a child. It is always possible to protect the child and your partner by using ARV," Greyling said.

But being on medication does not give anyone with the virus the license to engage in unprotected sex anytime, he strictly warned.

"Couples should only have to have unprotected sex during the [woman's] most fertile time... that must be monitored so they would know exactly when and so they would not take the risk of unprotected sex anytime," he said.

Meanwhile, the Philippines has yet to draw the same result from ARV drugs, which can be accessed by people with HIV in DOH-designated treatment centers for free, Belimac said.

Program pilot testing

But the DOH has recently launched the Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission program, which is running on a pilot test at the Davao Medical Center.

Under the program, pregnant mothers are given the option to undergo HIV testing and once they are tested positive, they are administered with free ARV treatment to ensure that they do not pass on the virus to their babies at birth.

However, it was still too early to come up with conclusions and evidence-based guidelines for the clinical management of ARV therapy among people with HIV, Belimac said.

In 2005, the DOH procured P8 million worth of ARV drugs, which could roughly benefit over a hundred Filipinos living with HIV.

The stock is being augmented by Global Fund, an independent public-private partnership established in 2001 to manage and disburse additional resources to help lessen the impact caused by HIV and other diseases like tuberculosis and malaria.

Health package

To sustain the supply of ARV, a negotiation between the DOH and Philhealth is ongoing for a health package that would guarantee ARV subsidy for out-patients, Belimac disclosed.

He, however, stressed that the ARV drugs available now are only given to those who urgently need it as per doctor's prescription.

But couples who may want to avail themselves of ARV drugs for the same purpose Greyling had, Belimac advised them to undergo a thorough counseling conducted by medical experts in designated state-run hospitals.

Taking ARV drugs is a lifetime choice, the doctor warned.

It cannot be treated like a multivitamin that one can take today and forget about tomorrow or else he or she will risk the probability of developing resistance against the drugs, Belimac said.

"When this happens, they might need a higher generation of ARV, which is more expensive but not as effective as the first line of drugs," he explained.

The drug, which is taken twice or thrice a day, could cost a patient between P5,000 and P30,000 a month.

Side effects

Beimac added that determination and a lot of spunk are also needed for a person who decides to take the drugs, which have a long list of side effects—from nausea, muscle pains, dizziness, headache, insomnia, numbness or prickling sensation, vomiting to fat maldistribution.

"Patients should be ready to experience that and they need a support group who will sustain them throughout their treatment," he said.

These unfriendly sensations were not strange to Greyling. During the first few weeks of his treatment, he experienced dizziness, skin rashes and fat loss in the arms and legs, he said.

"My face also went slim and bony," he recounted. Taking ARV drugs for nearly six years now, Greyling has adjusted well to it that he no longer suffers the dreaded side effects.

The pursuit wasn't a walk in the park for Liesl either.

Weigh pros, cons

While her husband mulled over taking ARV medication, she had to battle personal fears—that Greyling might die and she end up becoming a single parent—in between visits to doctors, counselors and her gynecologist, to check whether at 39, she could still bear children.

"All these pros and cons of having children, I had to weigh them up. One of my concerns was that suddenly Christo might fall ill and I have small children [to take care of]," Liesl said.

"I wanted somebody to give me the answer but in the end, it was I who had to make the decision," she added.

Like Liesl, Filipino couples who are considering ARV to bear HIV-free children have the final say.

"At the end of the day, it is still their choice but in order for them to come up with a concrete decision, they must have a series of counseling with us," Belimac said.

US experts shed light on surgical treatment for Parkinson's disease

FILIPINO DOCTORS GAINED A DEEPER insight on the treatment of Parkinson's disease with the culmination of "The Surgical UF-The Philippines Pilot Outreach and Training for Parkinson Disease" held at the Cardinal Santos Medical Center in San Juan.

The convention was hosted by the Philippine Movement of Disorder Surgery Center (PhilMove) in collaboration with the University of Florida, the Philippine Neurological Association and the Movement Disorder Society of the Philippines.

DBS surgery

Doctors Kelly D. Foote, Michael S. Okun, Hubert H. Fernandez and Ramon L. Rodriguez from the University of Florida discussed with their Filipino counterparts the breakthrough Activa Parkinson's Control Deep-Brain Stimulation (DBS) Surgery, a procedure that involves the implantation of a device to minimize the involuntary movements of Parkinson's patients.

The therapy seeks to control tremors, slowness of movement, rigidity and stiffness of muscles as well as poorness of balance, among others.

DR. MICHAEL Okun

DR. RAMON Rodriguez

DR. HUBERT Fernandez

DR. KELLY Foote

"We see a drastic improvement of 90 percent or nearly normal functions in our patients after the surgery. They get to lead normal lives after the implants," said Foote, who trained in France under the doctor who pioneered DBS.

"We learned that over one million Filipinos are suffering from Parkinson's disease. That's a very large population in the future who would be debilitated by the disease... and DBS can help improve their quality of life," Okun added.

According to Rodriguez, the best time for DBS surgery would be when the medication fails to minimize the disability of the patient.

"Parkinson's disease is a progressive disease. When the patient's response to medication is no longer as effective as before, we recommend DBS," he explained.

Rodriguez said DBS surgery is not constrained to Parkinson's disease patients. He said they also conducted DBS on patients with essential tremors, the second most common motor disorder. The surgery is just as successful as those on Parkinson's disease patients.

Spread advocacy on DBS

The Florida team was here to share their experience on DBS as well as the management of the medical complications of Parkinson's disease.

"We are here to spread advocacy on DBS. Hopefully, we can help Filipinos develop centers of excellence for Parkinson's disease, especially in the province. We have seen the center here in Manila and we are confident with the Filipino team," Okun said.

The convention concluded with a hands-on demonstration of DBS on two Parkinson's disease patients. The Philippine team was composed of neurosurgeons, neurologists, anesthesiologists, psychiatrist and psychologist.

For further information, please call the Philippine Movement Disorder Surgery Center at (632) 726-0776 or fax at 727-7653 or e-mail info@philmove.com.ph.

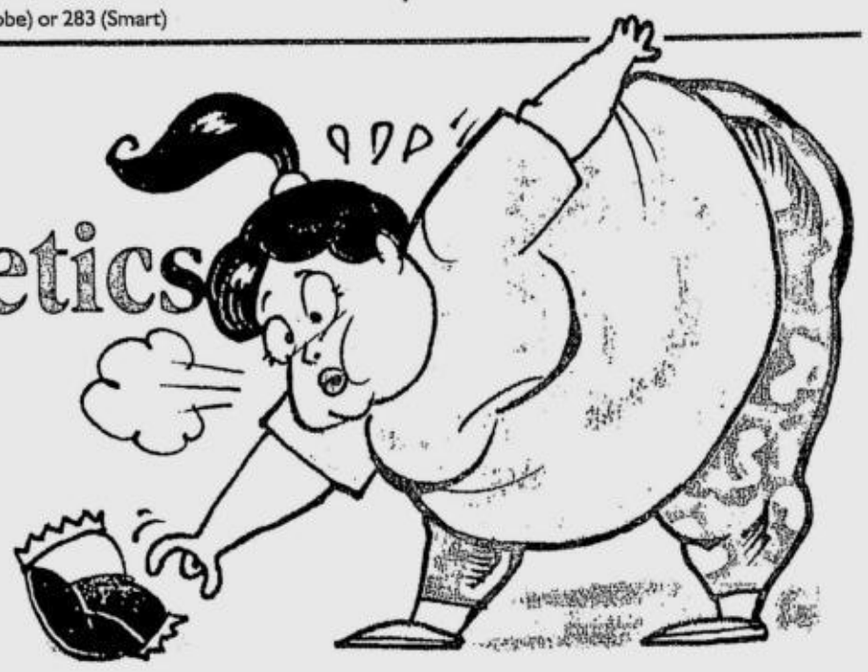
E-mail: pr_science_health@inquirer.com.ph

SCIENCE/HEALTH

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

Text us your feedback: inquirer hea name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart)

Shedding extra pounds that goes beyond cosmetics



By Charles E. Buban

HECEL ZAMORA, 28, doesn't mind being called huge or the stares that accompany it. She doesn't even mind being limited to donning oversized clothing.

But what made her decide to do something about her 275-pound frame was when mere walking was already becoming a tedious task or bending down to pick up things already a struggle.

"Being obese runs in my family. This fact did not escape my mother who even sent me to a special gym program when I was young. It did not work and as I went to college, I ballooned drastically, so much so that my waistline was already in the upper 40 inches," she recalled.

Having also tried taking specialized diet and taking slimming pills in the past, Zamora decided to seek doctor's advice for a more effective and longer-lasting result.

Type 3 obese

"When I first met her a year ago, she was already a type 3 obese, meaning with her weight and height of 5'8" her body mass index is already above 40 (hers was 41.8)," said Dr. Edward Oliveros of St. Luke's Medical Center and who is one of the bariatric surgeons of the Bib & Lap-Band Center at the Medical Plaza Building (21st floor) in Makati City where Zamora went to.

The BMI is one method of determining if one is obese or just overweight. This is done by dividing the person's weight in kilograms by his or her height in meters squared.

A normal BMI is in the range of 18.5 to 24.9 while one is already overweight if his or her BMI reaches above 25 (up to 29.9) while those with a BMI of 30 up to 34 are classified type 1 obese. A BMI of 35 to 39 fall under type 2 obese category.

Exceeds energy usage

"Obesity is described as an excess of total body fat, which results when one takes in more calories per day than what the body burns. Nutritionists have determined that the body normally requires 2,000-2,500 calories per day to maintain normal functions. If one takes in too many but does not burn it through physical activities, problem starts to appear. In fact, when one reaches a BMI that goes beyond 30, he or she is already risking a lot, health-wise," the doctor reminded.

He related that of the 300 million obese diagnosed worldwide, an estimated 115 million will develop serious health problems such as diabetes, infertility, irregular menstrual cycle, heart disease, stroke, sleep apnea, hypertension, severe knee and back pain, cancer and metabolic syndrome that may cause sudden and unexplained death.

"I was given several choices and what appealed to me was the Lap-Band System, which is a little drastic but a surgery that will not require stomach-stapling or cutting of the intestines like some other weight loss options I was presented with," Zamora.

Worked well

Oliveros admitted that although type 3 obese individuals will have difficulty bringing down their weight, he was glad that the surgical option worked well for Zamora.

"She currently weighs 141 lb and still losing 6 to 14 lb a week since her surgery in July 2006," the doctor reported.

As its name connotes, the Lap-Band employs the implanting of an inflatable silicone band around the upper stomach to create a new, tiny stomach pouch that limits and controls the amount of food that can be consumed. While it makes the stomach hold less food, it also induces the patient to feel full.

"Since there is no cutting, stapling, or stomach rerouting involved, and insertion of the band is accomplished through small incisions, it is considered the least traumatic, and least invasive of all weight-loss surgeries. The laparoscopic approach to the surgery also offers the advantages of reduced post-operative pain, a shortened hospital stay, as well as quicker recovery times," described Bom Chan, head of Bib & Lap-Band Center Obesity Solutions (www.lapbandasia.com).

Citing a clinical study conducted in Australia, Lap-Band patients can effectively lose as much as 87 percent of their excess weight in two years.

"There is an estimated 3 million Filipinos suffering from obesity, of which 600 thousand are morbidly obese. If we could do something about their condition and we have here an effective way of shedding their excess weight, then we will be able to improve their lives," Chan said.

How doctors think

EUREKA!

Queena N. Lee-Chua

RACHEL STEIN'S ADOPTED DAUGHTER Shira was fighting for her life, against not just one, but five invaders. Cytomegalovirus infected her bone marrow. Klebsiella bacterium caused her lungs to inflame. Candida fungus was growing in her mouth. Pneumocystis led to pneumonia. Parainfluenza virus racked her body.

Boston's Children's Hospital had the best pediatricians in the world. They subjected Shira to tests, pumped drugs into her and hooked her to equipment. They said that Shira had Severe Combined Immunodeficiency Disorder (SCID). SCID was rare in girls, and Shira's T-cells were not too few, but for Shira to survive, she needed a bone marrow transplant.

This was an extreme measure. Shira would be given lethal radiation to destroy her immune system, together with all the invaders. Then bone marrow from a donor would be transplanted into Shira to make her live. But the risks of infection and rejection were great.

For six weeks, Rachel prayed for God to give her strength. She made sure to understand every step the doctors took, and did her own research by talking to her pediatrician sister and reading articles on the Internet. Shira gradually appeared to grow better, and Rachel became convinced that Shira did not have SCID. Perhaps Shira had a diet deficiency.

Rachel requested the transplant team to repeat Shira's immune tests. But tests had already been done, the doctors said, there was no need to repeat them. Shira's T-cells were increasing, Rachel said. Shira was just recovering from infection, the doctors replied. Taking a deep breath, Rachel repeated that she wanted Shira's blood retested.

Rachel was right. The doctors could not believe the results. Tests showed that Shira's cells were all normal. Shira never had SCID. Instead, she, who spent the first weeks of her life in an orphanage in Vietnam, suffered from severe malnutrition, which weakened her immune system. Shira was home by the end of the week, and is growing well now.

Mistakes doctors make

Shira's case did not come from "Grey's Anatomy" or "House." It really happened, and now it is regularly presented as a lesson to doctors in Children's Hospital. In his fascinating book "How Doctors Think," Dr. Jerome Groopman of Harvard Medical School documents the errors in thinking that even the best doctors make.

The average US doctor, Groopman says, will interrupt a patient describing his or her symptoms within 18 seconds. In that short time, they have to decide on the likely diagnosis and treatment. Thankfully, many decisions are correct, but sometimes, they can be wrong, with sad consequences.

Groopman describes how doctors think, and explores why they make mistakes. In Shira's case, first, her doctors had seen many SCID cases, so they naturally tried to match typical SCID to hers. Groopman would often hear this quotation: "If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck, and quacks like a duck, then it's a duck." But it isn't always a duck. Physicians should remain open to other possibilities.

Second, once the diagnosis of SCID became fixed in the attending physician's mind, despite incomplete evidence, he passed on this belief to the residents, interns and transplant team. "Diagnosis momentum, like a boulder rolling down a mountain, gains enough force to crush anything in its way."

Third, because some doctors lack the expertise to deal with such a confusing case, they refused to change the diagnosis, and dismissed Rachel's suggestions. "Why pursue such a far-out and vague idea? Shira didn't fit the picture of the malnourished child." But not everything is known about the effect of malnutrition on the body. Rachel was not a doctor, but she educated herself and refused to be deterred.

Memorable cases

In the book, Groopman describes memorable cases, from chest pain and spine injuries to gluten allergies and colon cancer. From interviews with prominent doctors (all mentioned by name), he discusses how faulty thinking and emotions can lead them astray, and how the forces of marketing and money can harm us.

Best of all, Groopman gives us tips to deal with our own doctors. If in doubt, we should ask, "What else could my sickness be? Is there anything that does not fit? Can I have more than one problem?" Sometimes we should repeat tests, or get second opinions. When a doctor does not give us full attention, then we should change doctors.

"How Doctors Think" should be required reading in medical school. It is also for all of us who are concerned with our health and our lives.

"How Doctors Think" (Houghton and Mifflin, 2007) is available in selected National Bookstore branches.

Every issue of the Inquirer is already made from 100% recycled paper. But if every Inquirer reader recycled their newspapers for one year, we would all save an additional 3.4 million trees, 840 million kilowatt hours of energy, and 78 million gallons of oil. Support the PDI NewPaper Drive and help save the environment. For Metro Manila pick-ups, call Carpel at 430-0656 /430-8411, Laguna area at 897-4386 local 2126, Cebu at (032)232-0009, and Davao at (082)244-1711.

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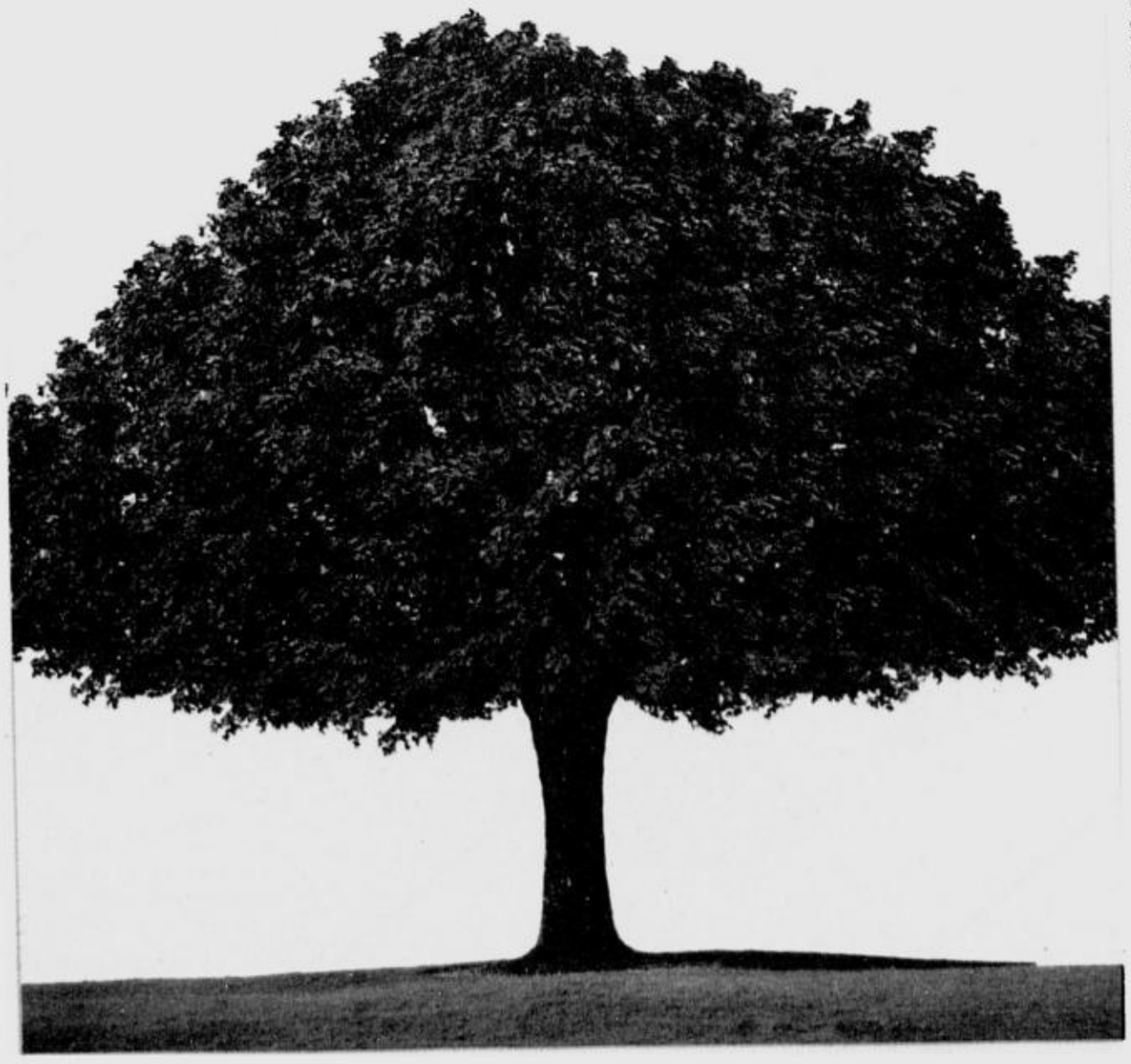


Fuel for thought

DISCOVER

Massie Santos Ballon

WHEAT CAN FUEL CARS, NOT JUST PEOple. In the Aug. 3 issue of the journal Biotechnology Progress, chemical engineer Apostolis Koutinas and his colleagues at the University of Manchester in England describe a relatively energy-efficient process to convert wheat into bioethanol. With help from researchers at Koutinas' alma mater, the University of Patras in Greece, the scientists hope that this new technique will help increase biofuel production in Europe, where more wheat than corn is grown.

One major drawback to using crops such as wheat and corn as sources of biofuels, however, is that they weren't designed to feed cars. (For those of you looking for it, rice isn't on the list of good biofuel sources. Worry instead about what could happen if rice farmers someday decide that biofuel crops are more profitable to grow and switch over.) Wheat and corn have been bred to be high-yield sources of food for both people and livestock. Using such food crops as fuel crops not only raises questions about who to feed—people or vehicles?—but also how much it costs to turn these grains into gas.

3 major steps

The process of converting plants into biofuels involves three major steps, each of which has obstacles that hinder cost-effective production. (It's been argued that people are more likely to consider the environment-friendly option if it becomes budget-friendly to be green.) First the plants have to be processed into biomass. Then the biomass has to be converted into sugar. Finally the sugar must be fermented to become biofuels such as methanol and ethanol. Processing biofuels is like cooking vegetables; raw vegetables have more nutrients (and more flavor) than those cooked for a long period of time. Similarly, much energy goes into making biofuels but the current yields aren't very impressive.

Koutinas and his colleagues say their method produces a kilogram of glucose sugar from wheat for approximately US$0.13. The process of turning the glucose into ethanol doesn't raise the cost very much more since the fermentation process uses baker's yeast. As a means of comparison, US$0.13 is about P6 by current conversion rates, and is roughly what Meralco charges per kilowatt hour.

Biofuel production

In the Philippines, the food issue is avoided by using the jatropha (tuba-tuba) plant. The Biofuels Act of 2006 and implementation of the 1 percent biodiesel: 99 percent diesel gasoline ratio has led to biofuel production from jatropha and coconut, among other plants. Republic Act 9367 even calls for the National Biofuel Board to determine if biofuel production is sufficient to recommend that bioethanol compose at least 10 percent of all the gasoline (not limited to just diesel this time) sold in the country by 2011.

Three years could be enough time to increase biofuel production in the Philippines to make the 10 percent bioethanol recommendation possible. The amount of land needed to do so bears consideration though. A recent paper from Jesse Ausubel, the director of the Program for the Human Environment at New York's Rockefeller University, argued that planting enough crops to use as biofuels the world over isn't very eco-friendly. (Ausubel also argues that the renewable energy sources aren't actually "green" and that nuclear energy is, but that's a topic for another time.)

So much land would be required, he says, that more of the environment would be disturbed, as parks and forests give way to biofuel crop farms. The wheat to gas technique Koutinas et al. propose could be of use in Europe, but it still raises questions about who, or what, the farms should be feeding. This biofuels issue is, if you'll forgive the expression, food for thought.

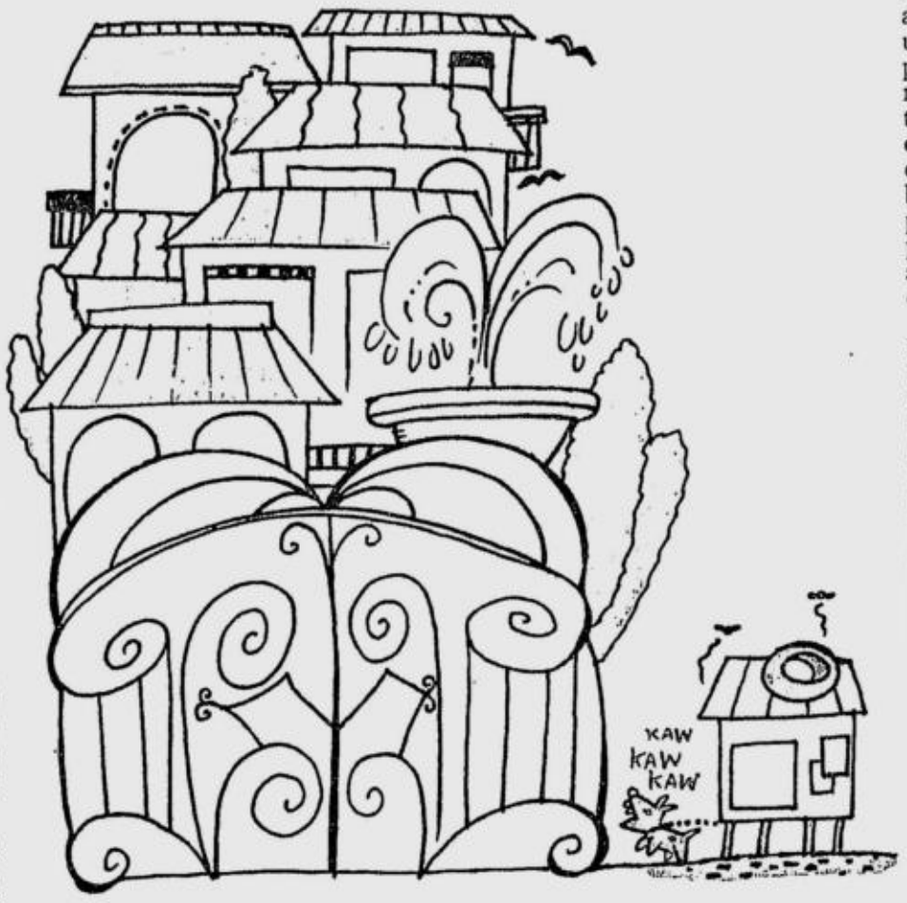
* * *

E-mail the author at massie@massie.com.

PROPERTY

Editor Cesar D. Mangawang

How Manila will move back to goodness



By Jacqueline Vega
Contributor

WE ARE A PREDOMINantly Christian country obsessed with The Sorrowful Mysteries to the exclusion of The Joyful and Glorious Mysteries. For those who are open to exploring interpretations of the Bible that accept wonderful things (i.e.. beyond suffering) happening now, then it is easy to accept that goodness is ...well, good.

I believe, however, that the majority of Filipinos are still stuck in the rhetoric of lack and have difficulty moving on to accepting goodness as a natural consequence for all. (That sounds like something in the American Constitution...which is not a bad thing. Right?) This is not to negate our past. If anything, we have not embraced our rich past and appreciated and preserved it more. If we are to accept that good things can happen to every single Filipino, we have to act so. Our insecurities have to be transmuted so they support us and are made ready to receive goodness.

Pattern of incivility

Since the sixties, the model of gated communities with Gestapo type guards has evolved to be the norm. (We started this and not the Americans). The pattern of incivility we suffered when we visited somebody's house in the exclusive village spread throughout the archipelago.

Ugliness was easy to accept because indifference and apathy for our neighbor's good was pounded into us by the culture of exclusive gated villages which became the money making pattern of developers that Filipino and the foreigners bought into. It was easier to accept that there was reason to fear those outside the monotonous subdivision than at working to create living communities. Lessons of the past, which made Manila a most beautiful city, were promptly discarded with the advent of the air-conditioner and the car, which cocooned us. Comfort is a very dangerous thing to have when it is coupled with indifference and exclusivity and we have paid the price. We are a nation of billboards on highways that are built to take us to our exclusive villages.

Recent developments in Metro Manila, however, are starting to point toward a more optimistic direction. We are relearning and rerealization that places and cities are more than a developer's ambitious plans and money-making scheme.

An enlightened political leadership has a lot to do in developing a functioning living beautiful city. Think Marikina City. Quezon City is also starting to shape up.

Diversity as way of life

The interesting major cities and other lively urban centers of the world offer diversity as a way of life. What we did was go the opposite way—we embraced monotony, single-use development, segregation of income levels, etc. In short, we embraced incivility and discarded diversity and community.

The widening gap between the rich and not-so-rich is because we have allowed this incivility to continue unabated for more than 50 years. The irony is that the not-so-rich, the poor, also want to live in exclusive areas when they are able to move up in life. It is a sad perpetuating reality right now. The truth is, the present scheme of things with it's ugliness and poverty is a consequence of that entitlement mentality and **not the cause of it**. To reiterate, the overproliferation of squatter colonies came about because of exclusivity or exclusitory practice. The more exclusive villages we put up, the more squatter colonies we also beget into existence elsewhere. No ifs or buts about that. That is a fact.

We are the cause of much of what is happening by our ignorance, our thoughtlessness and our not doing the work needed to create real communities. The different levels of existence that civilizations needs to function effectively have been eliminated, creating a society of extremes—with people living basically in two areas; "exlusive rich subdivisions" and the "squatter poor colonies hidden away somewhere." (Oh, there are now smaller subdivisions that mimic the rich subdivision. Nonetheless, still exclusive and exclusitory). Our mall culture is sadly tied into all of this too.

We need to make a major effort to change our attitude about exclusivity, that is, to come to grips with its deadening effect. We need to break free from the trap of thinking that things will always have to be this way. This effort requires mindful planning and working especially by those who can make a real difference in the short term. Doing so will create a beautiful and interesting city once again. Developers hopefully will continue to move away from the status quo and explore other models for developing their land bank.

As for existing subdivisions, if residents could sit down and discuss how they can over time work toward a more accommodating and diverse land use pattern and if we can keep our options open to accepting new ideas that generate diversity and community we can revive our economy and our city life. Till then, good luck to us!

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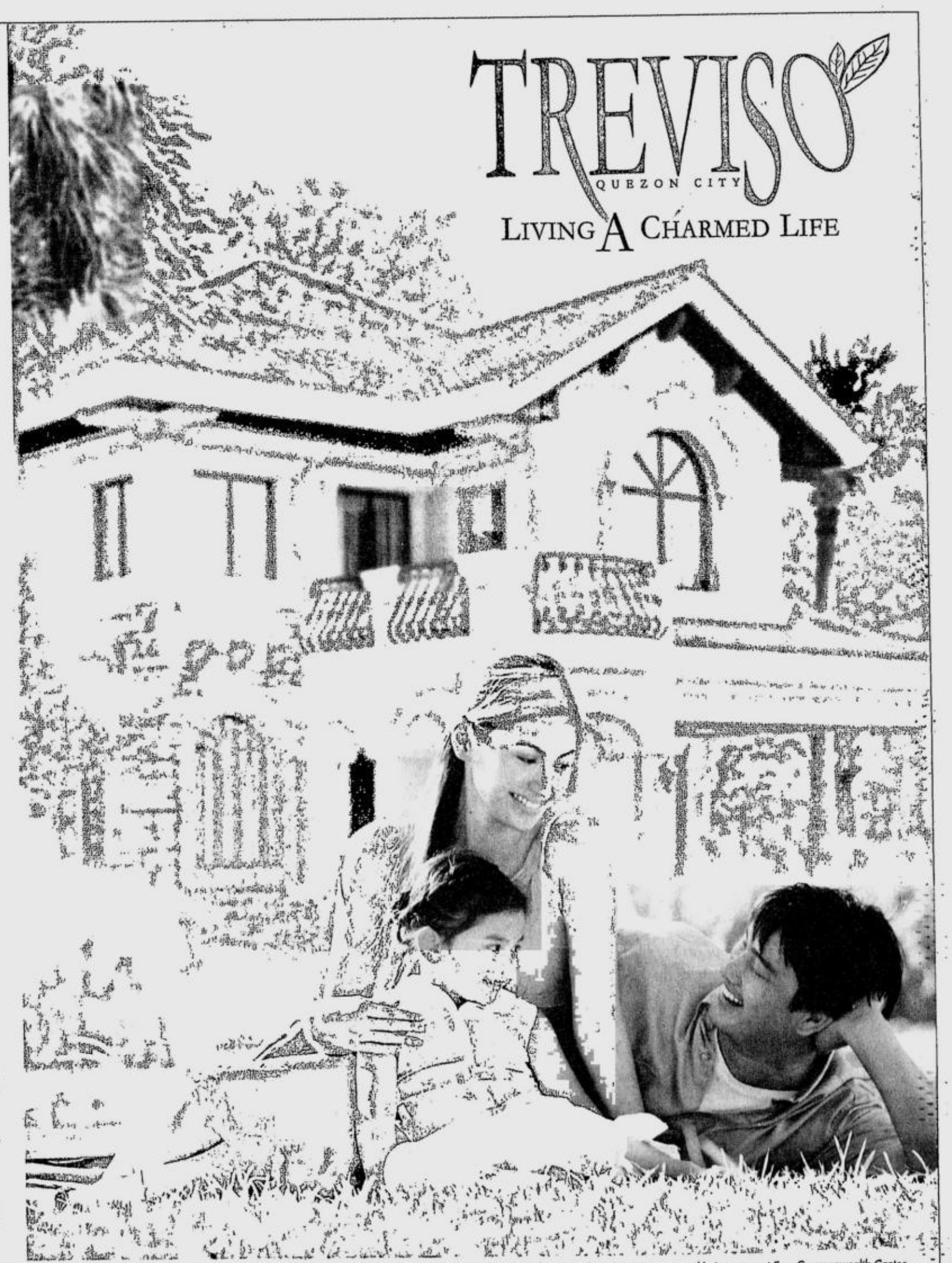

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The Agritainment concept

LIVING ARCHITECTURE

Marcos de Guzman Jr.

FOR SOME TIME NOW, OUR PURSUIT of economic growth has been defined by decentralizing development and bringing commercialization to the countryside. The construction of shopping malls is perceived as the inauguration of progress for any province. These enclosed and air-conditioned establishments are also what most Filipinos consider as the primary destination for recreation and entertainment.

On the other hand, the concept of Agritainment introduces us to another approach to boost the economy, providing not just entertainment but enrichment as well. It allows us a rich combination of education and enjoyment through an experience of the rural life, complete with a farm setting, housing selected animals and offering several landscaping themes.

Amid the fast-paced and technology-equipped way of living in the metropolis, city dwellers intrinsically long for the unhurried way of life in the countryside. Agritainment developments can provide us the venue and surroundings to learn and understand firsthand the ecological balance and healthy lifestyle that urban living still needs to espouse.

Breaking new ground

The Agritainment concept is breaking new ground in our country. A 60,000-square-meter area has been allocated for an Agritainment Theme Park within the 415-hectare Hacienda Escudero in San Pablo, Laguna and Tiaong, Quezon. It is located within the popular tourist destination called Villa Escudero. The transition of the well-known villa into Hacienda Escudero marks its expansion into a mixed-use first-class development project, intended as a leisure and tourism destination.

To be involved in translating this vision to a physical reality is an exciting challenge for us in our office, Architecture Network, and for the landscape design consultant, DQA Environmental Design Inc. Design work for the Free Admission Zone of the Agritainment Theme Park has already commenced.

The design will preserve the historical thrust of Hacienda Escudero, while espousing a relaxing and rejuvenating lifestyle. This project will launch the mission of its developer, Landco Pacific Corp., to showcase the richness of the country's culture and afford the present generation a firsthand experience of the truly Filipino way of life.

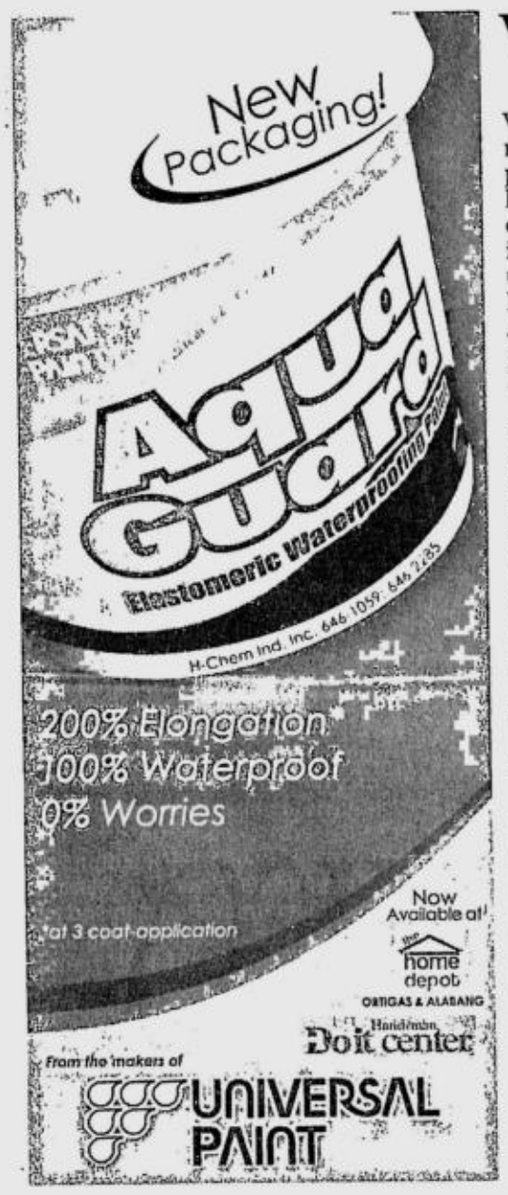
Critical

Planning an efficient layout and circulation is critical. The park should be able to accommodate a maximum capacity of 3,000 persons. Schoolchildren are expected to come in busloads while families and small groups are equally welcome to enjoy the tour. What's more, business seminars and wedding receptions will likewise be accommodated. With a good plan, these simultaneous activities can be successfully conducted, similar to the harmonious performance of a symphonic orchestra.

The Hacienda Escudero Agritainment Theme Park will also serve as a support to the country's agricultural industry. It proposes to promote awareness and arouse public support toward the country's major contributor to economic growth. Our country nestles 47 percent of agricultural land and almost half of the labor force in agricultural activities. These figures help us see its importance to our economy.

Providing a venue to understand this sector will be a valuable opportunity for both the urban and rural establishments to mutually enrich each other. With cooperation, this will speed up our country's move forward.

THE ENTRANCE gate of the Villa Escudero will soon welcome guests of the Agritainment development.



Vista Land listed shares at RP Stock Exchange

VISTA LAND AND LIFESCAPES INC. marked another milestone in the company's rapid growth as its shares were listed on the Philippine Stock Exchange beginning July 26. The newly incorporated holding firm combines the strengths of Brittany Corp., Camella Homes and Communities, Crown Asia, and Communities Philippines—all acknowledged market leaders in their respective segments.

"We are very proud of our companies," said Vista Land president and CEO Jing Serrano. "And together, under the banner of Vista Land, we are now the largest and leading homebuilder in the Philippines with over 100,000 homes constructed. We stand for providing value for money, assurance of reliability, a broad range of choices for various wants and needs, and the promise of a more enriched way of life."

International road show

The listing came after a very successful international road show to drum up support for its public share offering. Serrano and her team personally visited six global financial centers, namely Hong Kong, Singapore, London, New York, Boston and San Francisco, to promote directly to international investors.

UBS Investment Bank, its global coordinator and international bookrunner, reported that the property firm raised $535 million—the largest equity offering in the history of the Philippines—with a growing demand from the international market amounting to $2 billion.

Proceeds from the sale of shares will be used to finance capital expenditure which amounts to P7.166 billion over the next two years, settle loans amounting to P5.21 billion, and set aside P800 million for operational working capital.

Growth prospects

Vista Land's growth prospects is deemed an industry success story—it being one of the very few companies to have survived the Asian financial crisis in 1997, restructured its debt successfully, and find itself among the most trusted and admired brands in the industry 10 years later with a positive outlook for its future.

"In the last three years alone, we have pursued many groundbreaking developments catering to the low-, middle- and high-end segments of the market, providing homes and building communities where others believe to be impenetrable," Serrano said.

"We seem to have a knack for identifying growth areas and spearheading developments that translate potentials into concrete gains. We have also been aggressively pursuing vertical developments such as seen by our efforts with Avant at The Fort and Mosaic at Makati. What we are offering is a unique opportunity to be a part of this cutting-edge property development firm that has established itself as a formidable leader of the industry," Serrano declared.

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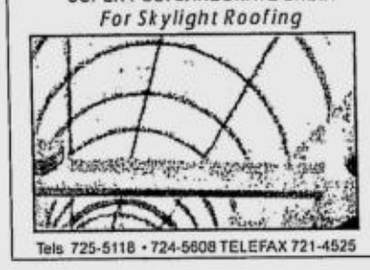
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US to put up pavilion in Asian real estate expo

THE UNITED STATES IS PUTTING UP A pavilion at the 1st Asian Real Estate Expo and Conference (Aireec), which will be held at the Philippine International Convention Center this year.

The US pavilion in Aireec will showcase American destinations, construction products, real estate properties, systems, tools and expertise alongside those of other exhibitors from various parts of the world.

US delegation

In a statement, Aireec organizer Expo and Convention Promotions Inc. (Ecpi) said the US Department of Commerce had begun promoting Aireec through its 125 offices worldwide after sealing its commitment to support the event.

"Sam Dhir, the director for International Trade based in Washington DC, is now working on inviting to Aireec such organizations as the Urban Land Institute, American Resort Developers Association, Housing Urban Development, Home Builders Association, World Bank, IMF and International Housing Coalition. Promotion will be massive in their 125 offices worldwide to bring buyer and investor delegations. He plans to visit Manila in August," said Ecpi president Leon Katz.

He said the US would comprise a big portion of the estimated 5,000 foreign delegation to Aireec, including members of the various real estate associations and their national and international umbrella organizations.

Katz said Aireec would also bring in the Realty College to offer a course on California Real Estate Principles. The course will qualify enrollees to take the California real estate examinations, a requirement for getting a license as an agent and broker in America's western state.

Other pavilions

Designed to be the largest international real estate trade show in Asia, Aireec will also have a Philippine pavilion that will be set up by the Department of Tourism to showcase the country's retirement and tourism destinations and facilities.

Other private sector but country-themed pavilions will house the exhibits of top real estate companies and property-related conglomerates, including investment and financing institutions, construction firms, industry suppliers, manufacturers, contractors and project consolidators.

"It (Aireec) will be the show of the world!" Katz said.

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Spa-inspired groundbreaking for Antel Spa Residences

IN A SOCIETY THAT HAS RAPIDLY EMbraced the concept of wellness, the newest project of Antel Land Holdings Inc. recently made its presence felt in a groundbreaking ceremony that signaled the emergence of a spa-inspired lifestyle at the new Antel Spa Residences.

The festivities, which featured a unique samba ambiance enhanced by fire dancing and heart-thumping drum beats, were held after sunset, setting it apart from the traditional groundbreaking rites of other development firms.

Breaking new ground

"We wanted Antel Spa Residences to be viewed as truly different from other traditional residential condos, because the concept behind the project—inspired by a lifestyle devoted to wellness—is a truly unique and fresh new take on condominium living," said Miguel Gascon, Antel's director for sales.

Gascon revealed that the new 29-story Antel Spa Residences will actually be the first of four towers to be erected in a 1.7-hectare property near Makati Avenue, behind the soon-to-be completed A. Venue Hotel and Residences and A. Venue Event Mall and a fitting addition to the fast-rising Antel Lifestyle City.

The strategic location of Antel Spa Residences allows future residents easy access to major thoroughfares that crisscross the country's chief financial and entertainment district.

Centered on wellness

He also explained that what truly sets the new tower apart from other traditional condominium towers is its adherence to wellness-inspired amenities, which include the Sky infinity pools and lounge, spa amenities, meditative and organic gardens and a nature trail that goes around the property.

Aside from the wellness facilities, buyers can also expect traditional high-end luxuries such as a business center, function rooms, grand ballroom, coffee shop, power gym and commercial arcade.

Relaxing ambiance

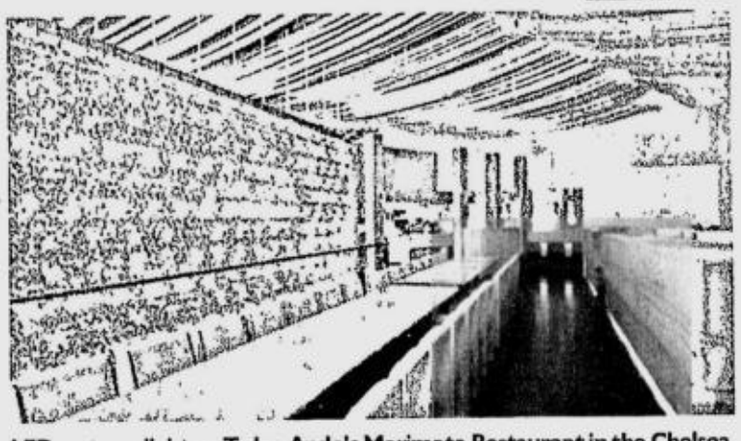
The architectural design of the new tower will also be inspired by elements of nature and the relaxing spa lifestyle, using bamboo fronds, leaves and flowing pools for picturesque backdrops that create conducive venues to relax the mind and body.

Condo units will also have similar thematic treatments while featuring more spacious layouts created by the beamless and column-free design standard of Antel.

Successful formula

Gascon also explained that Antel will continue its highly successful hotel rental pool program, which it had earlier implemented for the A. Venue Hotel and Residences. In the said program, the 4-star first-class hotel units located at the 11th to 15th floors of the Antel Spa will be handled by renowned management group Genesis Hotels.

Owners of the said units will enjoy the benefits of extra rental profits for the duration of the 5-year rental pool program before eventually reacquiring their units for personal use.



LED systems light up Tadao Ando's Morimoto Restaurant in the Chelsea Market section of Manhattan.

Revolutionizing approaches to lighting and design

THE LIGHTING IN ANY ROOM makes all the difference. When designing, I like playing with this special element and use it to highlight special features of a room.

I find that mixing LED lights with halogen lights create a dramatic effect to any space. In my experience, halogen lights still work best for highlighting focal points and other elements of interest within a space because of its sharp but soft light quality. But because halogen consumes a lot of power and can get quite hot, LED makes a good supplementary light source.

DESIGN DIMENSIONS

Isabel Berenguer Asuncion

Special diode

LED lights are best used in constantly lit areas like internal hallways, kitchens, or other spaces that need to be illuminated throughout the day. As night lamps, they can be used as guide lights or floor lights for pathways or hallways that lead into bathrooms, staircases and other areas that need subtle lighting throughout the night.

LED is a special diode that emits light when connected to a power source. Each diode or bulb has a semiconductor "chip" inside. When an electrical voltage is applied, charges combine to emit energy in the form of light. A British lighting experiment in the 1950s led to the first "modern" Light Emitting Diode (LED). Back then, LEDs were only able to produce invisible, infrared light. After many years and much experimentation, brighter diodes were developed for indicator lighting and other low-light applications.

More affordable

Today, the LED technology has developed into more affordable commercial lighting fixtures and systems. While early LEDs were only bright enough to be used as indicators or as displays of early calculators and digital watches, they more recently started to appear in higher brightness applications. LED has since become very popular because it is more cost-efficient than incandescent light. It is brighter, does not get very hot, and is of very low wattage: a three watt LED fixture provides as much lighting as 30-watt incandescent bulb. Best of all, they say LEDs have a long lifetime with up to 10 years of lamp life.

In 1997, American company Colorkinetics revolutionized LED lighting development with a new electronic technology that can control LED diodes, thereby generating millions of colors and a myriad of lighting effects. This technology of adding intelligence to LED devices was unprecedented. In my first encounter with LED, what intrigued me the most was its programmable aspect. It elevated lighting design to a higher level of artistry. It allowed a designer to work with lighting as though it were a dance or a poem, thanks to LED's ability to create color and rhythm.

Defining metro skyline

In major cities of the world, LED is used to light up commercial buildings and define the skyline of the metropolis. At Hong Kong's daily sound and lights show, buildings show off a kaleidoscope of colored lights, laser beams and searchlights largely produced by the LED technology. In Las Vegas, bright lights in this big city showcase imagination made real by LED. The sheer density and assortment of designs, colors and effects make Vegas more than live up to its name as the City of Lights.

In our local design community, LED technology has been used with caution due to its prohibitive cost. Nonetheless, it has slowly crept into both residential and commercial applications. With the rising cost of power, environmental issues and our constant craving to create anew, LED technology is the beacon for this generation's new approach to lighting and design.

Everyday resort living at Amalfi

EVERYONE APPRECIATES COMing home after a stressful day to unwind and would love to spend weekends bonding with family. The country's pioneer developer of master-planned, themed enclaves with befitting style while remaining within the reach of Filipino families, CrownAsia lends a new definition to relaxation within the privacy of your residence and inside the convenience of your community with its exclusive, resort-inspired development, Amalfi at The Islands in Dasmariñas, Cavite.

A proud affiliate of Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc., CrownAsia specifically designed the enclave of Amalfi and its homes to possess an ambiance evocative of its namesake in Campania, Italy which is also known as one of the world's most desirable recreational destinations. Vista Land is the Philippines' largest homebuilder offering homes for all income segments and catering to different lifestyles across the country.

Opportunities to relax

Amalfi is strategically situated within The Islands, a 100-hectare collection of enclaves developed by Brittany Corp. together with CrownAsia. The Islands boasts of world-class landscaping which provides the feel of living in a resort all year round at Amalfi. The entire community is strewn with lush landscaping and pocket gardens to encourage leisurely walks while enjoying the view and breathing in fresh air.

Residents are welcomed into the 24-hectare property by a meandering road for relaxed driving and a grand rotunda with various water fountain features.

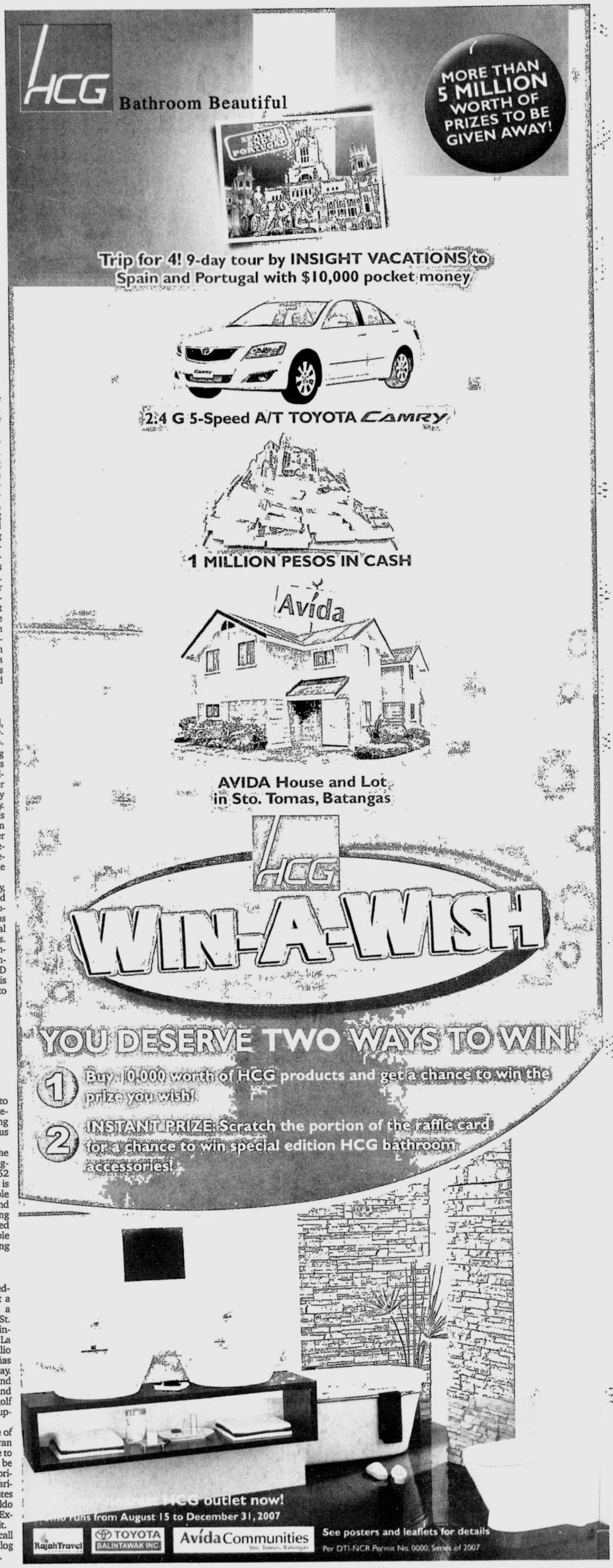
Six home models from the new Luxuria Home Series ranging from a floor area of 86 to 252 sq m on a 110- to 210-sq-m lot is currently offered to give ample room for starting a family and with more space for growing ones. Residing in your desired community is made attainable with financing options beginning at P13,160 a month.

Strategic location

Amalfi's nearness to prime educational institutions makes it a more ideal enclave to begin a family and raise children. St. Paul's College is located right inside The Islands while De La Salle University and Emilio Aguinaldo College in Dasmariñas are just a few minutes away. Cavite also has business and commercial centers like SM and Robinsons, and premiere golf courses to complement your upwardly mobile lifestyle.

The newly opened entrance of Amalfi on Molino-Paliparan highway cuts down travel time to Tagaytay while Alabang can be reached in 30 minutes via the primary entrance on Daang Hari-Molino highway. Other routes can be taken such as Aguinaldo Highway and South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) Carmona exit.

For property previews, call 873-1614 and 871-8412 or log on to www.crownasia.com.ph.



Twin tower condo to spice up P. Ocampo area

By Charles E. Buban

THE AREA OF P. OCAMPO (FORMERly Vito Cruz) Street and M. Adriatico in Malate is home to Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, considered as the oldest sports complex in Asia.

Another landmark will soon rise in this area. It is a 42-story, twin tower residential condominium development by Moldex Group of Companies.

Located on a 4,000-square-meter property right in front of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, The Grand Towers will offer a total of 1,800 (studio, two- or three-bedroom) units with prices starting at 1.4 million.

According to Moldex Group, the project targets start-up families as well as students and young professionals who put affordability, location and overall package high on their list.

The project will offer one floor full of condominium facilities and amenities to be located at the 3,000-sq-m Grand Podium Deck.

Spice up

According to Moldex, The Grand Towers will definitely spice up Vito Cruz area, thanks to the project's modern architecture and first-class amenities and facilities.

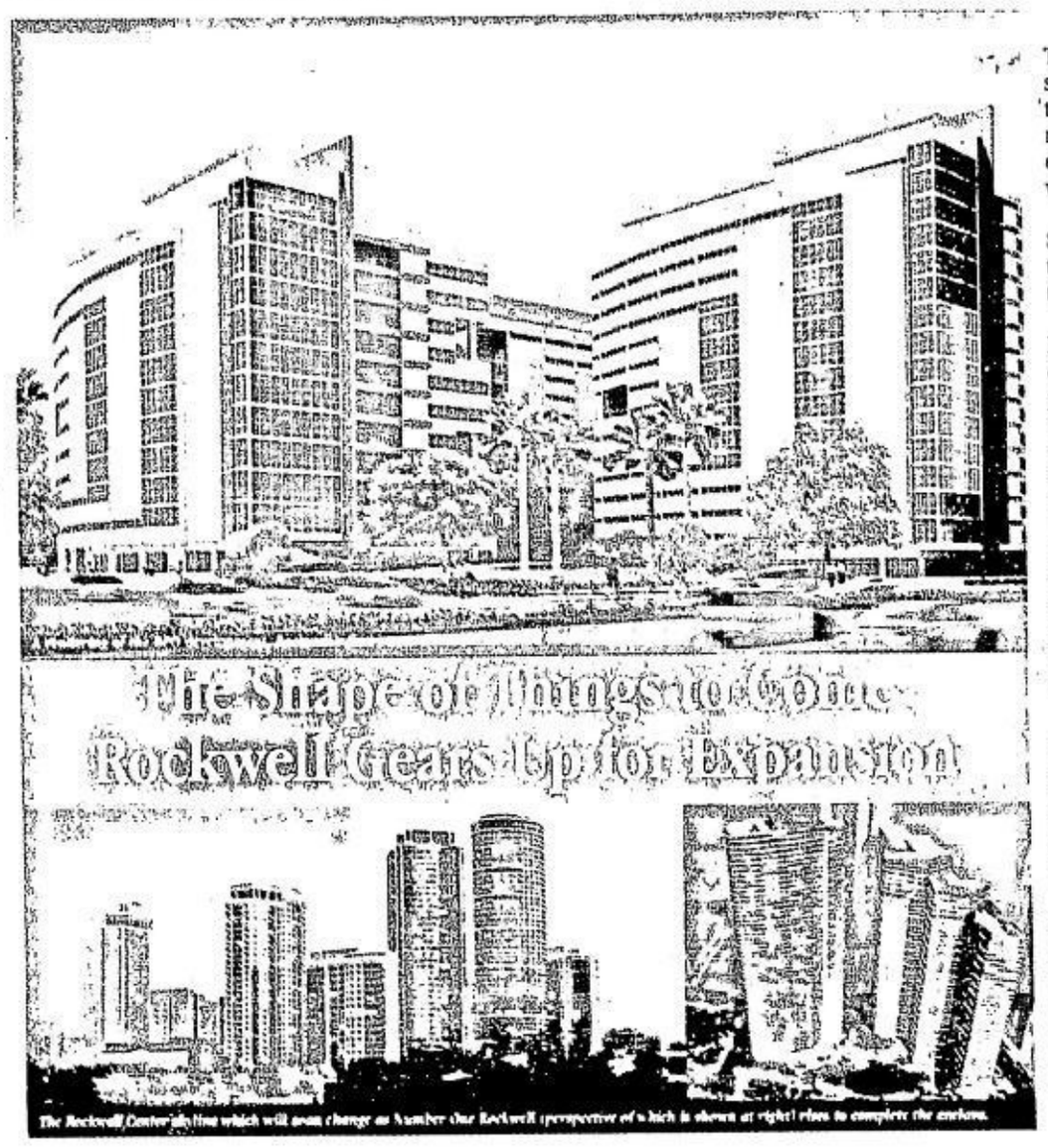
Aside from the lush gardens punctuating strategic areas of the Grand Podium Deck, an outdoor and whirlpool spa, a gaming lounge, safe children's playground, fully equipped fitness center and an expansive multi-purpose hall will make up the recreational area of the building.

Moldex Group added that the ground floor will be filled with commercial units plus the residents will get to enjoy a Wi-Fi enabled study area and full-service concierge.

The Grand Towers is very strategic considering its proximity to some of Manila's finest schools, business districts, commercial and entertainment centers.

Model units are on display at Moldex office (522-2675) at the ground floor of Golden Bay Hotel located at the corner of Padre Faura and Roxas Boulevard in Ermita, Manila.

THE GRAND Towers is a new landmark that will soon rise on P. Ocampo Street right across Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.



There is a place in the Philippines where everything is superb—the spotless streets are lined with lush greenery, the gleaming residential towers have topnotch facilities and recreational amenities for leisurely, luxurious living, and electric power is virtually assured of, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, all year round, and even during extreme monsoon weather.

Sounds like a community in the First World? It does. Welcome to the Rockwell Center, a pioneering luxury development in the heart of Makati, Metro Manila's central business district.

Developed by Rockwell Land Corp. (Rockwell), the premier community was begun in 1995, transforming a former thermal power plant site into a new living environment that integrates residential, office, educational, entertainment and retail areas into one self-contained community designed for those with a taste for the finest things in life.

Now, Rockwell has grown into a solid and robust property developer, becoming synonymous with the qualities that it has instilled in its various projects: excellence, innovation and the drive to deliver the best.

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Now, with the master plan of the Rockwell Center almost fully implemented, Rockwell turns its sights into other places and seizes new opportunities as it gears up for expansion.

More recently, Rockwell, in partnership with parent company Meralco, the Philippine's largest electricity distributor set out to develop a business process outsourcing (BPO) complex in the Ortigas business district. The project is only one of the many components of a new mixed-use inner-city development that has been mapped out for the Meralco Ortigas property.

Having secured its position among choice developers for the high-end segment in the country, Rockwell is well-poised to bring its expertise into places where it can replicate its flagship project.

Rockwell, a truly Filipino corporation, continually enhances its brand equity as it steadily expands its business.

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With a sustained annual growth rate of 25-35 % for the past few years and stabilized income-generating mechanisms, Rockwell's financial position has been solid and secure. It is poised to take itself into an even higher plane as it takes the steps necessary to become a publicly-listed company, congruent to its overall plan of diversifying its ownership base and sharing the benefits of its success.

Indeed, the shape of things to come looks bright and promising for Rockwell. With more than a decade's experience in developing prime property, Rockwell is well-positioned to embark on developing more places all over the Philippines where everything is simply superb.

Need space? Find all the space you need in your own Z-Loft.

One Rockwell
East and West Towers

Visit The Glass House model unit by the Power Plant Mall or call (632) 793-0088. www.e-rockwell.com

Twin tower condo to spice up P. Ocampo area

By Charles E. Buban

THE AREA OF P. OCAMPO (FORMERly Vito Cruz) Street and M. Adriatico in Malate is home to Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, considered as the oldest sports complex in Asia.

Another landmark will soon rise in this area. It is a 42-story, twin tower residential condominium development by Moldex Group of Companies.

Located on a 4,000-square-meter property right in front of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex, The Grand Towers will offer a total of 1,800 (studio, two- or three-bedroom) units with prices starting at 1.4 million.

According to Moldex Group, the project targets start-up families as well as students and young professionals who put affordability, location and overall package high on their list.

The project will offer one floor full of condominium facilities and amenities to be located at the 3,000-sq-m Grand Podium Deck.

Spice up

According to Moldex, The Grand Towers will definitely spice up Vito Cruz area, thanks to the project's modern architecture and first-class amenities and facilities.

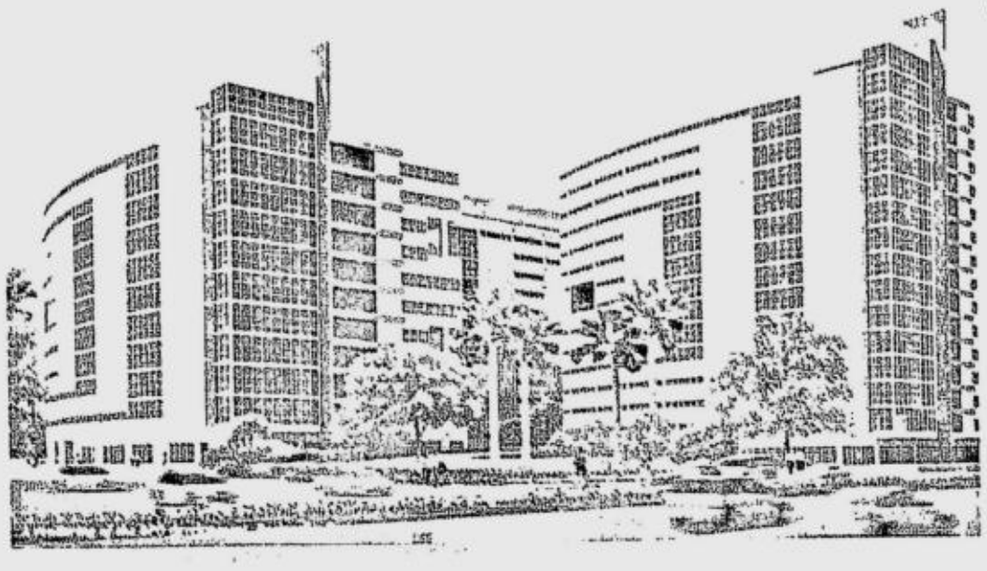
Aside from the lush gardens punctuating strategic areas of the Grand Podium Deck, an outdoor and whirlpool spa, a gaming lounge, safe children's playground, fully equipped fitness center and an expansive multi-purpose hall will make up the recreational area of the building.

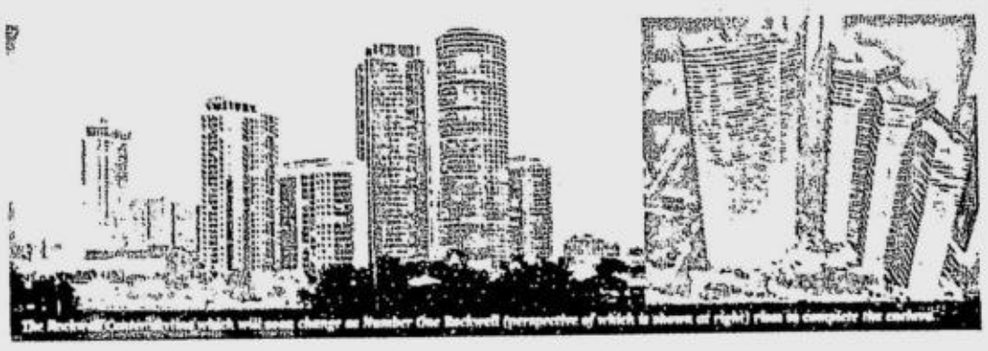
Moldex Group added that the ground floor will be filled with commercial units plus the residents will get to enjoy a Wi-Fi enabled study area and full-service concierge.

The Grand Towers is very strategic considering its proximity to some of Manila's finest schools, business districts, commercial and entertainment centers.

Model units are on display at Moldex office (522-2675) at the ground floor of Golden Bay Hotel located at the corner of Padre Faura and Roxas Boulevard in Ermita, Manila.

THE GRAND Towers is a new landmark that will soon rise on P. Ocampo Street right across Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.





The Rockwell Center, which will soon change as Number One Rockwell (perspective of which is shown at right) rises to complete the center.

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Editor **Pam Pastor**
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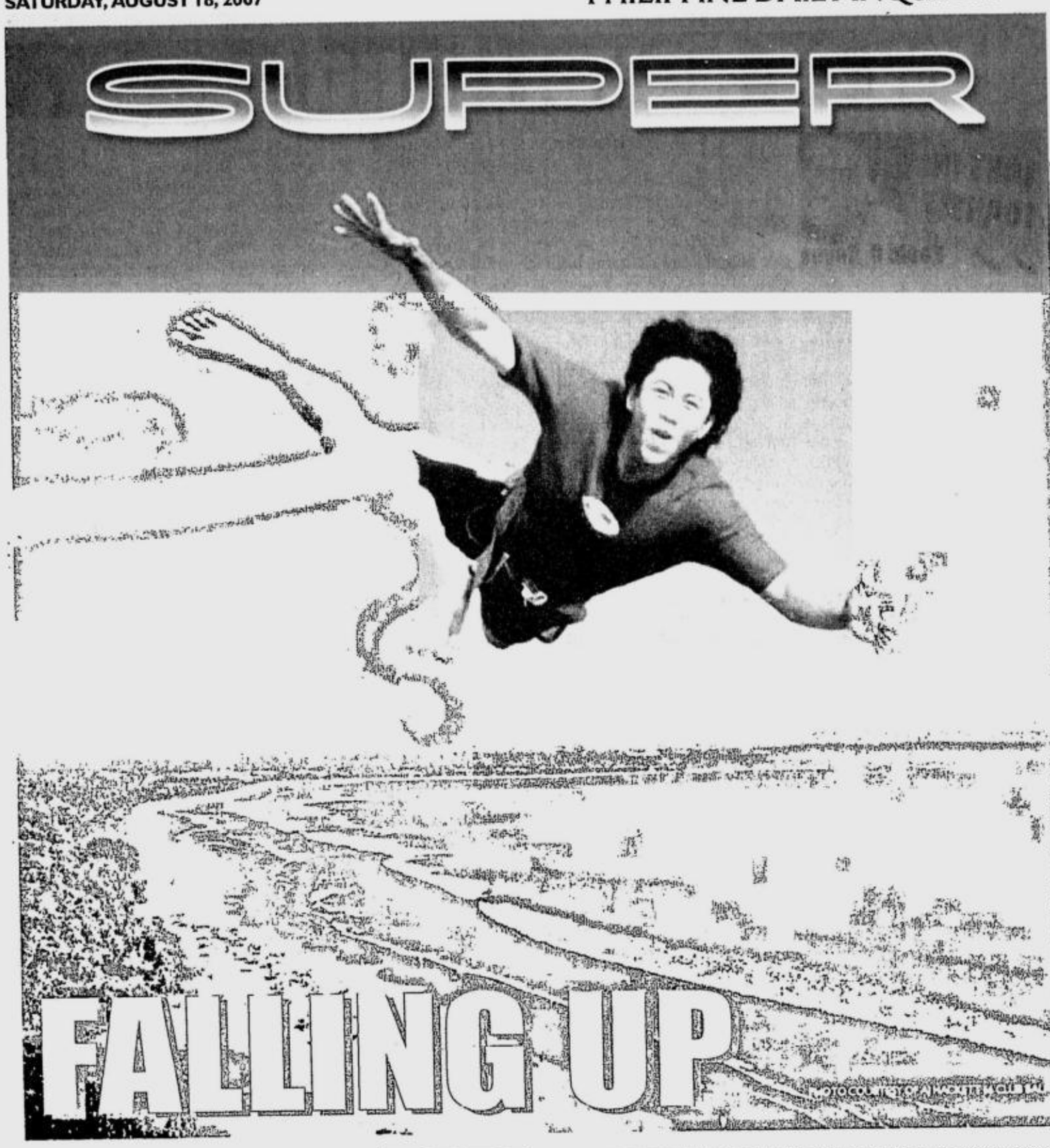


LEAPIN' LIZARDS! Bungee pioneer AJ Hackett

When in doubt, just bungee jump.

"All growth is a leap in the dark, a spontaneous, unpremeditated act without benefit of experience." – *Henry Miller*

IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO TELL when insanity had taken over logic.

For there we were, three friends standing on the edge of a tower at nightfall, a hundred and thirty five feet above a tropical island in the southern hemisphere.

From up there you could see everything—the Indian Ocean stretching out far into the edge of sky. The orange lights glowing like fallen constellations on the Balinese rooftops. The countless stars scattered wildly above.

Distances, spaces, height and depth, mathematical equations interpreted at that singular moment as one freaking beautiful world. There was only one thing left to do ... jump.

A HISTORY OF CHEATING

Just what is it that possesses generally sane human beings to want to cheat death? Take the case of New Zealander AJ Hackett, who has the honor of taking that first public leap of faith from Auckland's Greenhithe Bridge in 1986, successfully mindscrewing death because he was strapped to a bungee cord. Hackett then did it several times more, from other bridges and high structures, including the Eiffel Tower. From this madness was born an extreme sport that spread all over the world, including Australia, France, Germany, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Yet all such madness is based on pure logic—or pure physics to be exact. The bungy, which is Kiwi slang for "elastic strap" works as a giant rubber band. The bungee cord is considerably shorter than the height of the structure to allow it to stretch and absorb the energy of the fall. When the person who's hooked on to the bungee cord jumps, the cord stretches to its limit and then snaps back up. The motion goes on, until the energy is used up. The thrill of speed varies depending on the jumper's distance from the earth. Applying gravitational laws, the greater the distance, the faster the rate of acceleration.

Hmm ... so again I ask, just what the f*** is it that possesses sane people to do this again?

LEAP OF FATE

It was time to find out.

As I was the first to get strapped to the bungee cords (because I lost a game of "ba-

FALLING/ C4

Raising healthy kids while your spouse is away

Raising kids is not an easy task. What more if your spouse is working abroad? There are bills to pay, work to attend to, and a home to maintain. The good news is, not all things in life are hard to do, like keeping your children healthy.

Your children's future is important. That's why you need to take care of their health so that they grow up bright and strong. This can only be achieved with a healthy diet. Eating food with Zinc and Iron is a good way to start.

Zinc is an important nutrient in keeping the skin smooth and healthy. It speeds up the healing of wounds so they don't develop into scars, which is perfect for kids because they enjoy running and playing outdoors.

Zinc also keeps the body healthy inside out. It helps in the production of white blood cells which fight all forms of infection in the body, making it stronger.

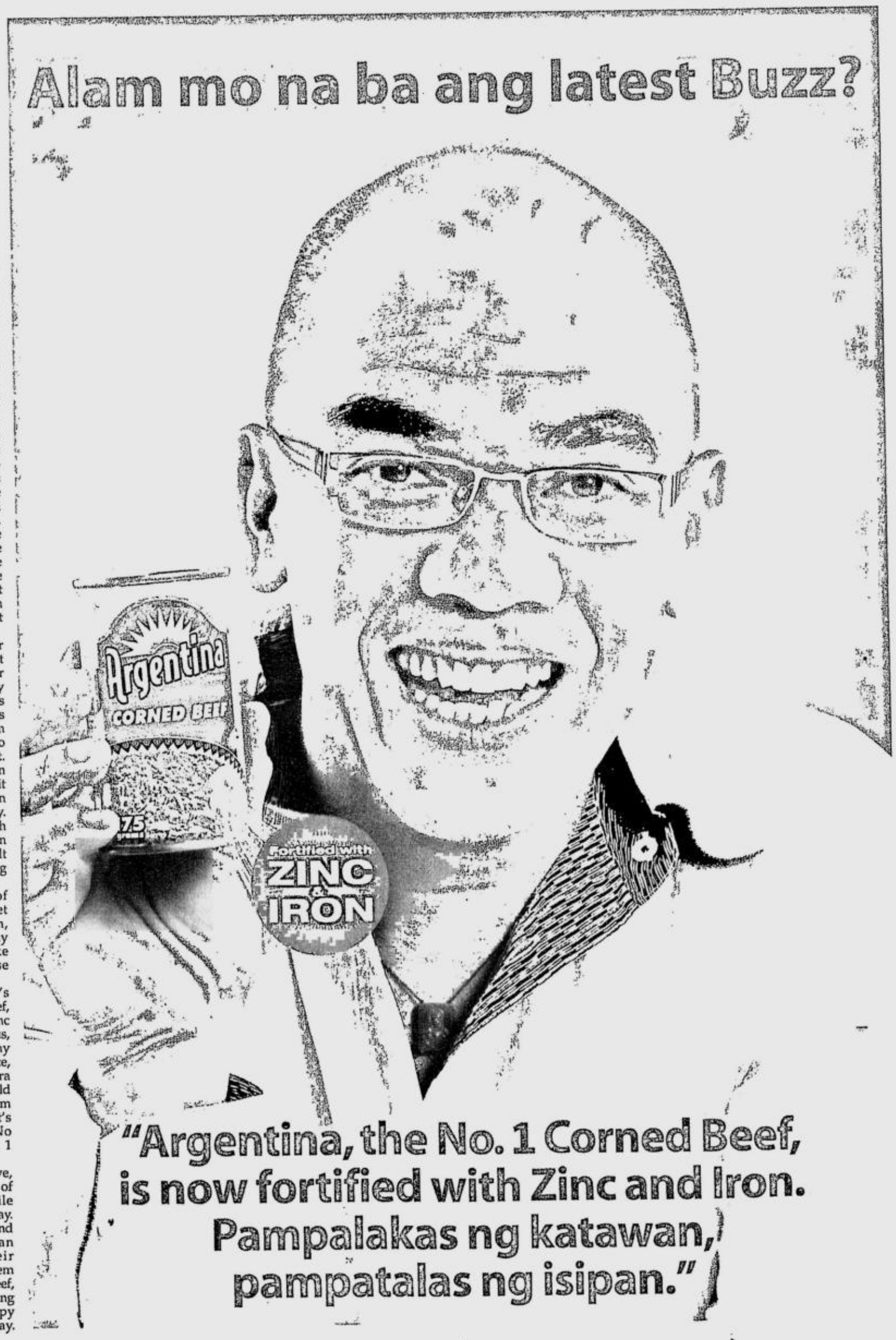
Iron, on the other hand, is one of the most important nutrients our body needs, especially the young ones. This is so because it carries oxygen to help in energy production, so children become alert.

What's more, Iron sharpens the mind as it helps distribute oxygen throughout the body. Lack of Iron (which means little oxygen in the brain) could result in a slower thinking process.

With the range of benefits you can get from Zinc and Iron, there's no reason why you shouldn't make your kids get these nutrients.

Good thing there's Argentina Corned Beef, now fortified with Zinc and Iron. It's delicious, and available in many variants: Regular, Lite, Hot and Spicy, Extra Long Shreds, and Gold Label Premium Corned Beef. And it's affordable, too! No wonder it's the no. 1 corned beef!

As you always have, continue taking care of your children while your loved one is away. Make them healthy and strong, so they can really enjoy their childhood. Serve them Argentina Corned Beef, your partner in keeping your children happy and healthy everyday.



Split second

By James Gabrillo

A FRIEND ONCE told me that peace is the fruit of war, of struggle. Like in writing fiction, I wonder how much explanation we should give.

The people behind this section have all encountered huge changes. Things are much better now, and it's great to see that in the end, understanding prevailed. In one way or another, I think we've all grown in humility.

I feel awkward whenever some people would approach and praise the way we handled everything—but I don't think we deserve the applause. In the end, it was about duty. We did what we were supposed to do. We embraced the complexity and ended up with a stronger character, believing that only cowards refuse to battle so as not to get wounded. We know that just to struggle is a victory.

The fact that we're here—alive and doing cartwheels—means that trust is still given to us. But much more will be expected, I know. I'd be lying if I say that I'm not watching my steps, but at the back of my mind, I'm thinking that I'd rather make mistakes than appear like a sure ball who, in reality, sucks big time.

All this is nothing if we don't share it to you. I know that it's one thing for us to make you read, and it's another to make you care. It would be nice if you can help us find that perfect thread that would connect our vision to yours; because really, in the end, we want you to get something out of this section.

Right now there are so many things to grapple with, and it's exciting. Similar to a boxer who has to sacrifice in order to remain in his weight division, I know I can't eat too much ice cream at the moment. Personally, I'm not promising anything spectacular. I can assure you though that this space will not be used to spread this generation's slavery to cheap glitter, or on things that would harm one's soul. Passion boiling just under the surface—that's what I'm going to look for in the people I'll be featuring in the column.

I can assure you that we're putting a little bit more love in the things that we do here in these pages, and because of that we're feeling this uncontrollable, unexplainable sense of joy while working—and that, I think, makes the big difference.

Now or Never(land)

LOST IN TRANSIT

Paolo R. Reyes

FIFTEEN YEARS BEfore a Bolivian execution squad gunned him down in 1967, a 24-year-old Che Guevara hopped on the back seat of a beat-up motorcycle and embarked on an eight-month odyssey across South America.

The journey—which was chronicled in his autobiographical memoir "Diarios de motocicleta," and later adapted into a film ("The Motorcycle Diaries") by Brazilian director Walter Salles—transforms a brooding, asthma-stricken bed-wetter into the most famous beret-toting revolutionary of the 20th century.

Even though the 2004 film dramatized his evolution from a sappy Argentinean student to a ruthless Cuban guerrilla, it did leave viewers with the notion that personal journeys, especially sojourns of the reality-bending sort, are transformative.

As we saw with the young El Che, straddling the invisible border between youth and the limbo called young adulthood is never an easy place to be. In the beginning, there is always a nagging desire to drop everything behind and take a first class flight to your own private Neverland, where you can hook up with your old buddy Peter and his delinquent gang of lost boys.

The airfare, after all, is dirt cheap. All you need is a little baggie of fairy dust and a delirious desire to get loaded on happy thoughts.

The over-hyped hoopla over your arrival can be contagious, and occasionally addicting. More often than not, you'll be coaxed by your own utopian delusions to ditch your dog-eared passport and trash that yellowing return ticket to reality.

Life is sweet in this secluded wonderland, you tell yourself, hardly aware that your grasp on the real world has slowly slipped away. But somewhere along the way, you get tired of dealing with dodgy pirates, possessive mermaids, rogue Indians, and hungry crocodiles. And the prospect of swashbuckling with Captain Hook is never a pleasant encounter.

Eventually, the escapist games of Peter and your gang of lost boys begin to lose their allure, and you realize that this once bewildering business of growing up might not be so bad after all.

Change is inevitable, and coming face-to-face with reality can be a real pain in the ass. But, sometimes, the only way to move forward is to take a step back. Even if that means setting out on a dusty motorcycle ride across a rough continent, or flying towards the "second star to the right, straight on till morning."

Illustration by CJ de Silva

Change of fools

By Pam Pastor

"He who rejects change is the architect of decay. The only human institution which rejects progress is the cemetery."
—Harold Wilson

LIKE EVERYONE ELSE on this planet, I've had a long history with change.

I rushed into some changes with the eagerness of a naive teenager. Hair color. New love. Technology. Fresh obsessions. Allowing more people into my world.

Difficult

Some changes, although difficult, I still tried to welcome with open arms. My parents splitting up when I was 12. Having to give up the house I grew up in, the house my grandfather built. Taking an unplanned break from university life when an ex decided to say a temporary goodbye to sanity. Friends moving away. My brother quitting our band.

It didn't take me a long time to learn that the hardest changes to face are the ones that are beyond your control, the ones that hit you seemingly from out of nowhere. These are the changes that make you feel as though the rug has been pulled from under your feet, the changes that leave you sprawled on the ground, wondering how the hell you will get up.

But because change is a great teacher—and because you really are left with no choice—I kept getting back up.

Getting up

There were times when getting up meant taking a deep breath and scrambling to your feet alone. And there were other times when getting up meant being surrounded by people who did not just cheer you on but actually pulled you up and helped you see that change can actually be a really good thing.

This section has gone through a lot of changes the past few months. Some changes came as a surprise. And when we got over the shock of those changes, we started planning our own positive ones.

These are the changes you've seen unfolding over the past weeks—and they would not be possible if it weren't for the passion of the Super team, the enthusiasm of our contributors and the dedication of the people working behind the scenes.

Not done

We're not done yet. More changes will come. We have big plans not just for this section but for those of you who have spent a chunk of your Saturdays reading the pages we lovingly put to bed on Thursday nights. And I can tell you now that things will just keep getting better.

Advertising icon Bruce Barton said, "When you are through changing, you are through." I'm definitely not through. The goddesses of change can bring it on—I'm ready for more and I'm cooking up my own.

Sigh Candy

By Katrina A. Holigores

A thousand words are unspoken in a sigh. The singular release of breath, accompanied by an all original sound (composed by sigh-er) may represent anything from relief to sad surrender.

It can signal delight while recalling an afternoon spent in the company of a new friend or bring back with full force a painful memory of a past love. For whatever reason, when a sigh springs forth from one's lips, it is never shallow, it comes drawn from a place deep within and is released into the here and now. Sighing is the most acute assessment of the power of what was experienced and its effect on the present. Wow. Deep. Sigh.

I've been collecting sighs recently, mostly mine, generated by changes that have occurred in my personal and professional life. There were sighs that welcomed the changes, and there were many more sighs that acted as the only way to lessen the dull ache in my heart when they were not welcome at all. I've been privy to other sighs as well, those of friends and family around me; it seems, that sighs are as universal as a deep belly laugh, and depending on the delivery can be met with sympathy or scorn.

So I carry a jar full of sigh candy, and every now and then I share one (or many) with a friend, or have a piece in private. What I've discovered is that each one symbolizes moving on, in other words, if you can sigh about something, then it's behind you and the same way you push the breath out, you also push yourself forward if only to be fully aware of how and what you feel then and there. Sounds stupid, sigh, I know.

If anything, a sigh can help. It is an affirmation and a release. It welcomes in a happy thought and bids farewell to unpleasantness, all you need to do is breathe. Change is inevitable and will bring about every kind of emotion imaginable. Thank goodness no matter how affected we may get, no matter what part of the world we are in, we can always just stop, inhale and ... sigh.

Let there be wind

By Tals Diaz

YOU KNOW HOW IT IS WHEN you bump into someone you haven't seen for a while and that person says "there's something different about you, but I can't place it?"

That, I believe, is the true quality of change. It is less of a conscious decision, but more of a realization that what once was is no longer. It's not a wham-bam-thank-you-ma'am/sir jolt of recognition, but an awareness that had built up slowly and naturally with the collected subtleties and nuances of time. What was once a blank canvas is now a painting, and today it's a different picture from when I first learned how to paint.

What I see in the picture of "Out the Window" in Super today is a renewed strength in having to weather the shifting winds. In my little canvas, I've been chronicling a journey that was hopefully less of a self-seeking kind, but rather one that always meant to inspire readers that the real adventure in life is in the mind and the heart. And no adventure worth embarking on is without its turning points.

The true test of character is one's ability to weather the winds. There is much significance in being a culture aware of the *ambihan* and *habagat*, the seasonal gusts we are familiar with because of our place in the world. Do we ever learn from them? Those changes can be the absence of people who once sailed alongside us but have now chosen to follow their true norths. Or even the presence of new people we've discovered to be navigating along the same nautical lines after all.

Like an old Master told me, when you're hit with the winds of change, you can build walls or windmills. To those fellow adventurers and captains, past and present, here's to building our windmills.

Super Answers

CELEBRITIES ARE CONSTANTLY bombarded with interviews. This time, Super turns the tables on them and gives them the chance to ask the question—and we want you—yes, you—to give them the answers.

Last week, Miriam Quiambao wanted to know: What is your highest vision and greatest version of yourself and of this country?

Fiona Vivero wrote, 'I see myself giving care and comfort to the sick and the dying and rendering my humble service to the less fortunate every way I can. I hope to see this country full of people who are responsible and who show care and concern not only for themselves and those close to them but for all their fellow citizens.'

This week, Kristine Hermosa wants to know, 'Where can I go in Manila to find good quality material to make into clothes?'

E-mail your answers to super@inquirer.com.ph with the subject heading 'super answers.' Your Super answer will be printed next week.

SUPER FRESH! Status Quote

When asked what he thinks about Filipinos buying his films for 25 cents: 'As long as they're seen by people, I don't care. I'm f-in rich!'

—Quentin Tarantino

'You get the film industry that you deserve. You don't buy a Filipino film for 25 cents. Watch it in the theatres.'

PHOTO BY EDDIE BOY ESCUDERO

FALLING UP

LEAP of faith.

From page C1

to bato pick" *demmet*!), my friend had asked the jump operators on the top of the tower if there were any rules we had to follow before we plunge to our near-death. With the unnerving cool of a Zen master, one guy replied, "Nothing. Just jump." (I was quite familiar with that tone; it was the same one my brother would use in the dinner table when he would ask me to pass the salt.)

Then another guy added, "Stretch out your hands. And jump."

Truly, these are great words of comfort when you're peeing bricks from a hundred feet high and ready to vomit out your heart.

With my bound legs, I inched my way to the edge of the tower. I stretched out my hands. And I jumped.

And I screamed louder than a gay guy in the front row of a Madonna concert.

HIGHER GROUND

But something happens within those few seconds in mid-air, which is nothing short of a spiritual experience. My mind cleared up. I thought of nothing else and yet was intensely aware of the world that wasn't just around me anymore, but was a part of me.

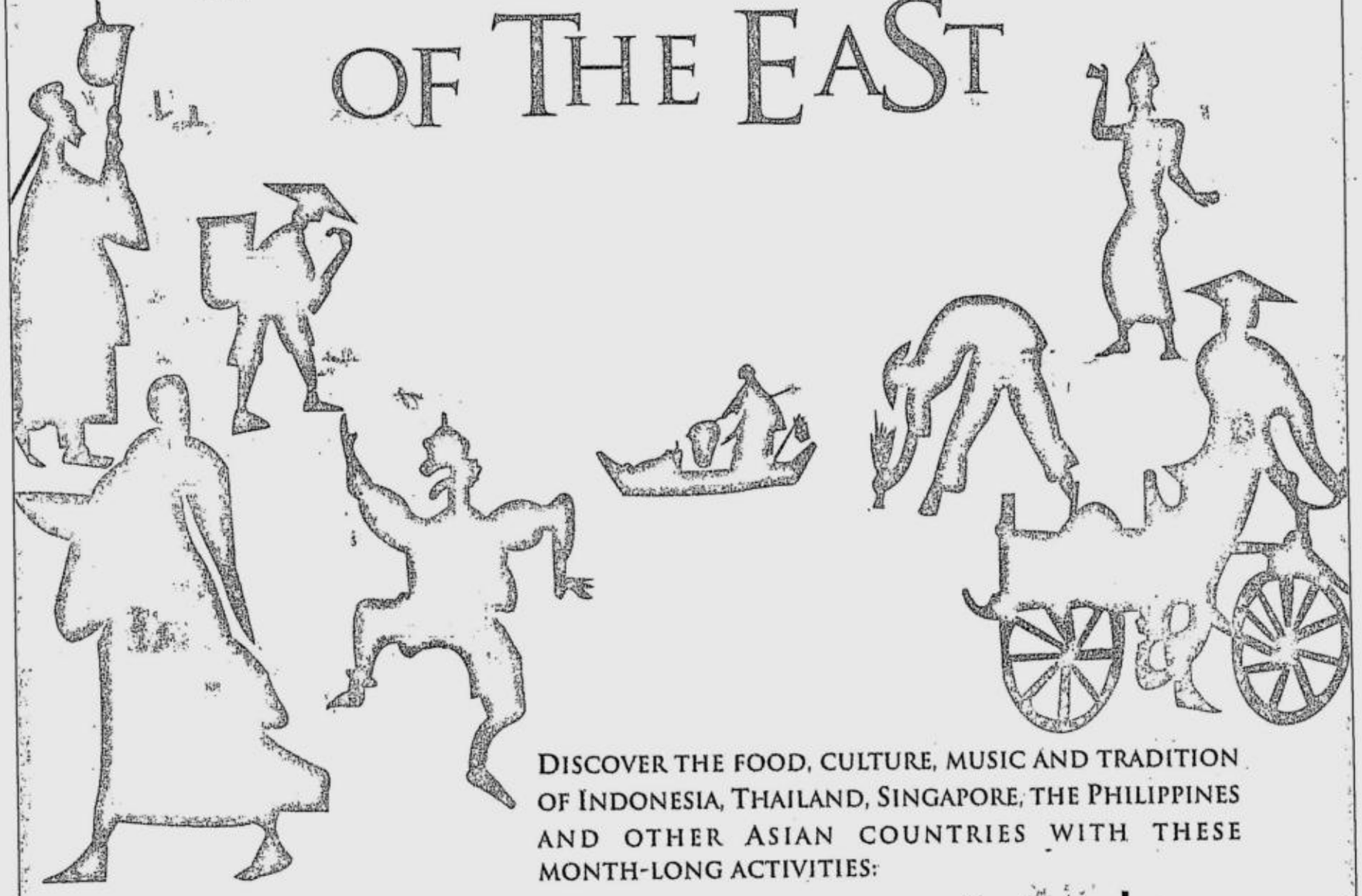
Right before you hit the ground, the cord snaps and shoots you back into the air until gravity pulls you to fall again. You fall again and again, and each time, your fear grows less and less. By the time you stop moving, you are suddenly not afraid of anything. One may think of gravity as a force of nature that pulls you down, but now I have come to believe that it is a force that centers you.

So what is fear then? Most would say that fear is born out of the unknown, but perhaps there is an even greater fear that arises from what is known. All those things in your mind that impose limits and build walls, leading to the real insanity.

May it be known then, on this glorious day on a tropical island, I discovered that the real thrill in taking any great leap is an open mind.

TAKING the bungee plunge.

EXPLORE THE FESTIVE MARKETS OF THE EAST



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ALL EVENTS HAPPENING AT THE LOUNGE

Thailand Week
Aug. 20 – 5 pm to 7 pm
"Thailand on Center Stage: Thai Royal Classical Dance Performers"
Thailand's Temptations.

Malaysia Week
Aug. 25 – 5 pm onwards
"Malay Mark: The Art of Malaysian Tribal Tattooing"
A Taste of Malaysia.

Aug. 26 – 5 pm to 7 pm
"Malay Moves: The Court-Classical Dances of Malaysia"

ASEAN MONTH
August 27
Celebrating the Spirit of Solidarity in Southeast Asia
"A cultural presentation highlighting the rich culture and heritage of the Philippines"

THE BLOCK
SM City North Edsa

Philippine Week
Aug. 17 – 5:30 pm
Ethnic Band Performance
"Katutubong Kayamanan: Filipino Neo-Ethnic Music"

Malaysia Week
Aug. 24 – 5:30 pm
Tribal Tattoo "Malay Mark: The Art of Malaysian Tribal Tattooing"

Malaysian Desserts
"A Taste of Malaysia: Malaysian Food Exhibit for the Sweet Tooth"

Thailand Week
Aug. 25 – 5:30 pm
Royal Classical Dances
"Thailand on Center Stage: Thai Royal Classical Dance Performances"

Thai Desserts
"Thailand's Temptations: Sweets and Desserts from the Land of Smiles"

Singapore Week
Aug. 26 – 5:30 pm
Face Painting
"Colors in Drama: The Art of Face Painting"

Chinese Ensemble
"Ethnic Ensemble: Indigenous Sounds of Singapore"

Singaporean Desserts
"Saccharine Singapore: A Taste of Singapore's Sweets and Desserts"

SWEET Bali High

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SUPER

Fragmentation, reinvention and success

Young film director gets hold of more big prizes

THUNDER ROAD

James Gabrillo

I FIRST MET RAYA MARTIN two years ago during a photo shoot for this section that featured 22 young avant-guardians. After watching his 30-minute thesis, "Childhood in the Philippine Islands, Undated," in our uni's library, I knew he had to be included on the list. He came on the shoot wearing a pink shirt with the words "Everybody Loves an Asian Boy" written on it.

Raya went on to reap recognition in important film festivals here and abroad. The list is pretty long, I don't even know where to begin. Another entry's added to the roll—a few days ago, Raya was awarded the Best Picture and Best Director Awards in this year's Cinemanila International Film Festival Digital Lokal competition for his film, "Autohystoria."

I caught Raya right before he gave a seminar on Independent Filmmaking in Cinemanila to chat about his film, his creative influences, and his next project—a trilogy about his childhood.

Raya, congratulations. How do you feel right now?

I'm very excited to premiere my work, which I thought wouldn't see the light, or otherwise, of the local multiplex theater.

Talk about "Autohystoria." What inspired you to pursue it?

My friend filmmaker Khavn and I were discussing about the execution of (Andres)

FRAGMENTATION/ D2

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NOSTALGIC, PUZZLING. Is this the coolest movie poster or what?

Fragmen

Bonifacio, which had several stage adaptations. This was the same time I had some issues about moving back to Manila after living in Paris for a few months. Around the same time my brother, also one of my best friends, moved out of the country to Singapore for work. It was limbo for me. I tried to put these two things together, the personal and the historical.

Do you think an audience familiar with your work will be surprised by the film?

Yes and no. It seems that reinvention runs in my blood, despite the fact that I tackle similar subjects every time, so that my works are quite different from each other, specifically in my approach and treatment. I have done a documentary, a silent film, and "Autohystoria" is close to video art and installation.

Do you ever take into account what the audience is willing to accept?

There are things that an audience wants and needs. He wants to feel. He needs history.

Artists have conventionally symbolized time through completeness or disintegration. Now we're seeing a lot of depictions of time through motionlessness. Talk about the type of weight that you want to fashion with your body of work. Talk about completeness and fragmentation in your films.

It's interesting that you brought up the idea of fragmentation. I've always believed that our generation has a fragmented mind,

SUPER FRESH! SATURDAY SEVEN

Rooms for Inspiration: The works of Kawayan de Guia

Room of Rol

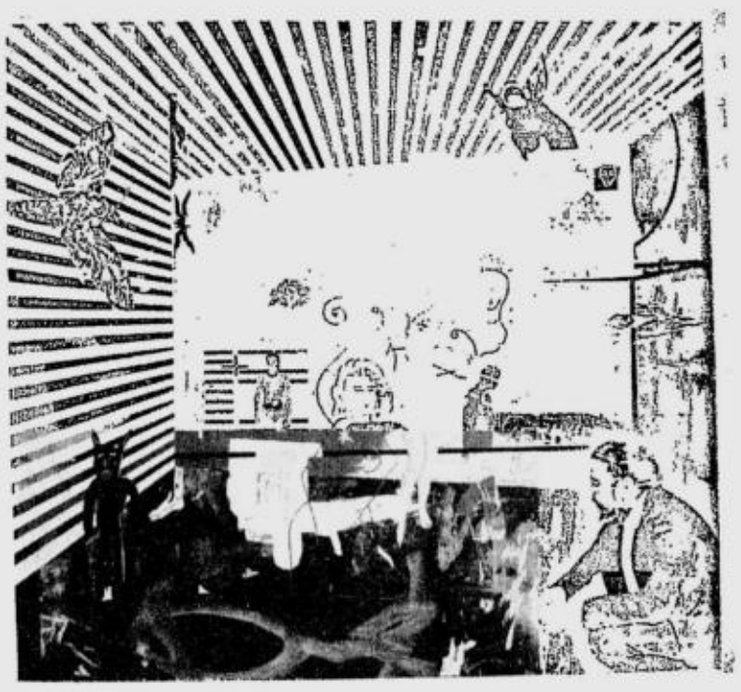
By Juana R. Manahan

FRENCH THINKER CHARLES Baudelaire said, "Let us beware of common folk, of common sense, of sentiment, of inspiration, and of the obvious." Originality, on the other hand, is the element that adds uniqueness to one's inspiration. Consider the artist Kawayan de Guia. His latest exhibition at the Drawing Room entitled "Incubator" is homage to all the artists that have inspired him. Kawayan created different "rooms" for each artist. Tributes and studies on other artists are nothing new, but viewing the exhibited works, it can be noted that Kawayan's "inspiration" goes far deeper than simply copying a style. Kawayan grew up among the artists community in Baguio, who later came to be known as the Baguio Artist's Guild. The Guild is made up of several artists representing various disciplines; painters, sculptors, performance artists and those who dabbled in a little bit of everything. It was in this environment that Kawayan was nurtured.

Each of Kawayan's pieces takes elements of the artist that he dedicates the work to, but adds on an element of his own. At best, Kawayan's work is inspired by Pop art. Pop art made popular in the '60s is a form of abstracting reality. It takes objects out of their natural contexts and gives it a new meaning in the story that the artist tells on the canvas. In his work titled "Tommy Hafalla," Kawayan paints an image of a camera to signify the work of Hafalla as a noted Cordillera documentary photographer. In the checkered squares on the floor below, one can look closer and see that the black squares are made up of photographs of Cordillera people that Hafalla is known for. Kawayan dedicates another painting to his famous father, Kidlat Tahimik, who made a name for himself raising awareness about ethnicity. In this painting, elements of Kidlat's ethnicity are scattered throughout, including a vista of the Banaue Rice Terraces. His father's famous acronym, L.I.B.H.R.T.Y, which was an acronym for "Limit Idiot Box Hours Thank You," as a part of a campaign to reduce watching television, appears on the back of the jeep. Both father and son took inspiration from Marcel Duchamp's famous painting of the bearded Mona Lisa entitled L.H.O.O.Q, which, when each letter is pronounced by itself, translates roughly into a French phrase: "She has a sexy ass." In placing acronyms in their works, both Duchamp and Kidlat Tahimik sent out a message to their viewing audience. In using the acronym in the painting dedicated to his father, Kawayan has made the acronym itself an icon that will forever represent Kidlat Tahimik.

The work dedicated to installation artist Roberto Villanueva includes an image of his work entitled "Bridge of Cross Culture," which was an installation he created in Lake Naguri, Japan. Kawayan makes use of many images of sticks, wood and bamboo, as Villanueva made use of natural materials to create his installations. Art can be expressed in various media, like Rene Aquitania, whose performance art made his body the central spectacle. Performance art goes back to the Dadaists and Fluxus' Happenings, wherein they created art that could be experienced by all the senses. Kawayan captures these happenings in the canvas by visually guiding the viewer to the central figure of the body of the martyred St. Stephen in the middle. Bodies are also the central focus of sculptor Agnes Arellano, who is famous for using the method of direct casting or cold cast marble to create her sculptures. In her "room" are several statues of religious icons. A Thai Buddha and a Virgin Mary share the same space, as Kawayan communicates the big role that lifelike statues play in religion. This also highlights Arellano's mastery of bringing sculptures to life. In the background, one will notice the face of a more European style statue, almost in the form of Michelangelo's David.

What homage to Filipino-Baguio based artist would be complete without one work dedicated to BenCab. A framed work of BenCab's "Sabele" series sits on the corner of the



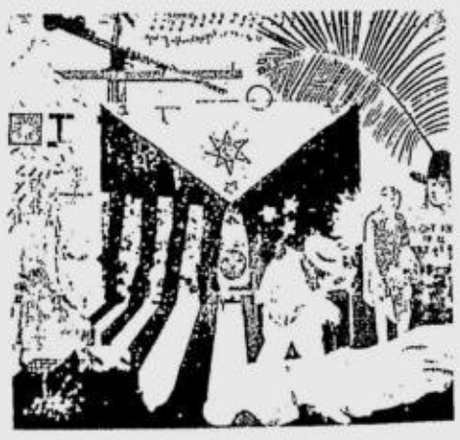
ROOM of Rene Aquitania

ROOM of Agnes Arellano

ROOM of Tommy Hafalla

ROOM of Kidlat Tahimik

Super looks at seven works, one artist



ROOM of Santiago Bose

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tation, reinvention and success

From page D1

JURIES IMAGES

brought about by generations and generations of war-makers. You can see that in the way we talk and tell stories, our attention span over things, definitely in the decisions that we make. I love the idea of mixing formats and media as a projection, both literally and figuratively, of our consciousness. Our wholeness is defined by our fragmentation.

What is it about your subjects that attracts you as a filmmaker?

We're a generation that is completely starting to forget history. History is important, our whole lives are based upon past experiences. But also teachers of history forget that we're a different audience, so my approach is in a way that I'd appreciate it myself coming from this younger batch. Names and dates don't mean a thing to us; feelings and our understanding bring us closer to the essence.

What are your biggest creative influences?

A variety of things: Russian cinema, '80s horror films, Kuya Germs' "That's Entertainment," Frederic Chopin, Belgian beers, Canadian indie bands, green tea, a walk in the park, late-night bus rides.

What do you think about fame and celebrity?

It's fun while it lasts, but one has to take good care and responsibility. People are watching and listening.

What are some of your recent favorite films?

Carlos Reygadas' "Silent Light," Gus Van Sant's "Paranoid Park," and Jade Castro's "Endo."

What project would you really want to do now?

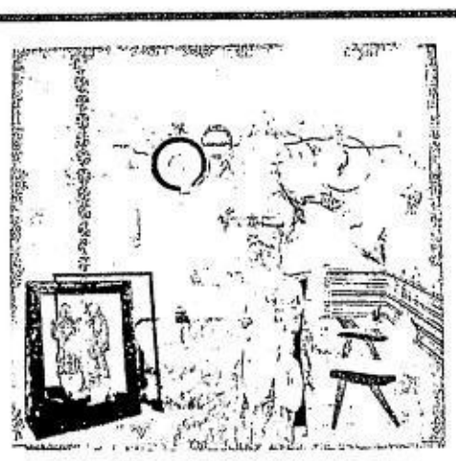
Next month I will be shooting three feature films billed as one. They're a series of personal events in my childhood towards being a filmmaker. It will be my first non-historical film in a while. I'm also preparing my next period piece called "Independencia," a family drama set in the American occupation.

How do you define success as a filmmaker?

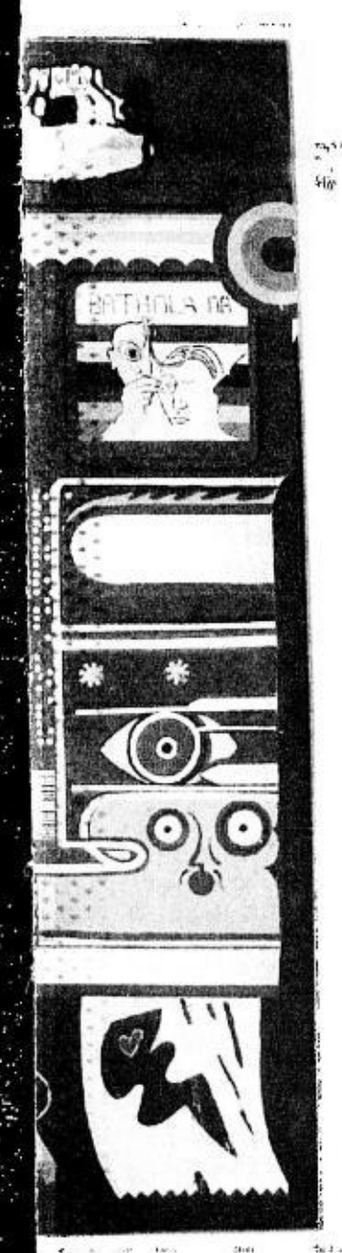
I think it's similar to how you define success as a human being. It's hard to define. One has to live to answer.

Catch "Autohystoria" tomorrow, August 19 (Sunday) at 10:30 p.m. in Cinema 6 of Gateway Mall.

erto Villanueva



Room of BenCab



room, while a caricature of the artist takes the central canvas. To the right of the figure of the artist is a barcode. Could this be Kawayan's statement of pointing out the prolific number of BenCabs that are saturating the market? Kawayan also hails Santiago Bose, famous for his cause related art which raised awareness to the socioeconomic status in the Philippines. Bose's own style was inspired by graphics dotted with patriotic icons. Kawayan achieves Bose's layered graphics technique by making use of mixed media to highlight the differences and depth in the work.

Kawayan's own style comes together as he draws from all his mentors and from popular art movements. His own painting entitled "Ako" sits on the floor of the exhibition; humbling himself in the presence of the works in homage to great artists. Depth is something that Kawayan hoped to achieve in his works. He takes his cues from Pop art wherein he creates a new context to familiar images, while adopting the graphic style of layering. He also replicates the cubist idea of an amorphous space, where it flickers between reality and pictorial reality, and looks at space from simultaneous viewpoints at once. Kawayan, like Picasso and Braque before him, also adopts the use of placing "found objects" and mixed media. Not many artists use this method with great success.

There was a time when I thought that many artists used the "found object method" as a means of selling something as "art," when there was really not much more to the work than a cigarette butt super-glued to a canvas. De Guia's mixed medium paintings are the first of the younger contemporary artist that make use of the medium to tell a compelling story. His is the first mixed medium work that I did not want to take apart. Instead, De Guia puts to use the phrase of sociologist Marshal Mcluhan in saying, "the medium is the message," thus achieving the depth that he wanted in his works of art.

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SOUND CREW. Jakey Yulo, Manika Yujuico and Jonjon Yulo

FUNK AVY and Caliph8 play OPDM (Original Pinoy Dance Music) during the Rewired Experiment at Warehouse 135.

REWIRED takes clubbing to a new level by pushing the boundaries of electronic dance music.

REWIRED. Martin Atayde and Jessie Suaco

HOUSE HONCHO. Domini Primero

SONIC SPECTATORS. Ria Yujuico and Jami Ledesma

SPIN DOCTORS. Stevie Tambunting and Funk Avy

SUPER FRESH PEEPS

Dance Dance Revolution

By Paolo R. Reyes

SAVE FOR THE OCcasional alcohol-fueled scuffle or drunken celebrity sighting, Saturday nights never really offer anything out of the ordinary.

In fact, bare-knuckled showdowns—complete with hair-pulling and a nasty exchange of expletives—have become a spectator sport for all sorts of bar rats, casual observers, and accidental voyeurs.

But recently, Super was witness to a different kind of showdown, this time involving three local DJs and a live visual artist.

At the Rewired Experiment at Warehouse 135 last Aug. 4, progressive music meisters Caliph8, Stevie Tambunting, and Funk Avy faced off in a friendly battle that pitted their cutting-edge brand of dance music with the cool digital art of Dondon "Houseboy" Renato.

"We like to call it OPDM, or Original Pinoy Dance Music," shared Warehouse 135 head honcho Domini Primero, as the trio played side-by-side, dishing out sonic slabs of electronica. Above the DJ deck, a massive screen displayed Houseboy's graphic interpretation of their music.

"Club music and its accompanying culture constantly crave for new ideas," says DJ Adrian Cuenca of Rewired, a consortium of DJs that aims to push the boundaries and break the rules of dance music. "Many DJs and club owners stick to what is safe. We want to take clubbing to a new level, and the only way to move forward is to innovate."

So if you're in the mood for a little sonic innovation, Cuenca and his band of electronic bandits hold court at Warehouse 135 twice a month. Tonight at 10 p.m., Miss Badkiss, Silverfilter, and Funk Avy go head-to-head. On Sept. 8, it's Rubber Inc. versus the Teichman Brothers from Germany, followed by the skinny rumble between James Bald 008 and Kevin Ruiz on Sept. 22.

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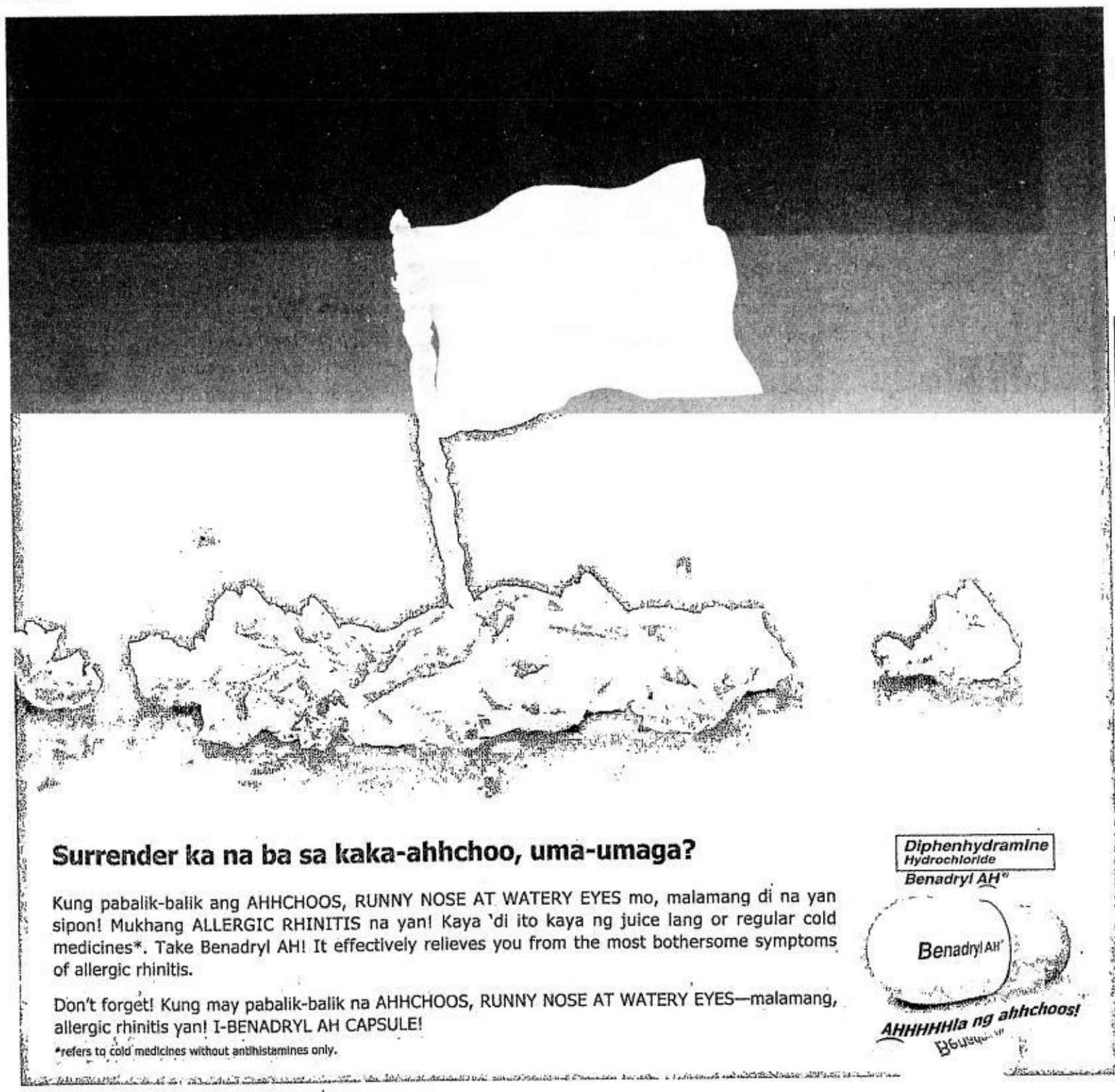

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Frequent and Regular Sneezing	X	✓
Stuffy Nose	✓	✓
Runny Nose	✓	✓
Itchy Eyes	X	✓
Fever	✓	X
Sore Throat	✓	X
Nasal Discharge	✓	✓ Usually clear
Body aches and pains	✓	X
Triggers/ Causes	Viruses	Allergens (pollen, house dust mites, molds)
Duration	Lasts about a week	Lasts as long as the allergens are present
What your doctor may advice	Rest, fluids, pain relievers, decongestants	BENADRYL AH

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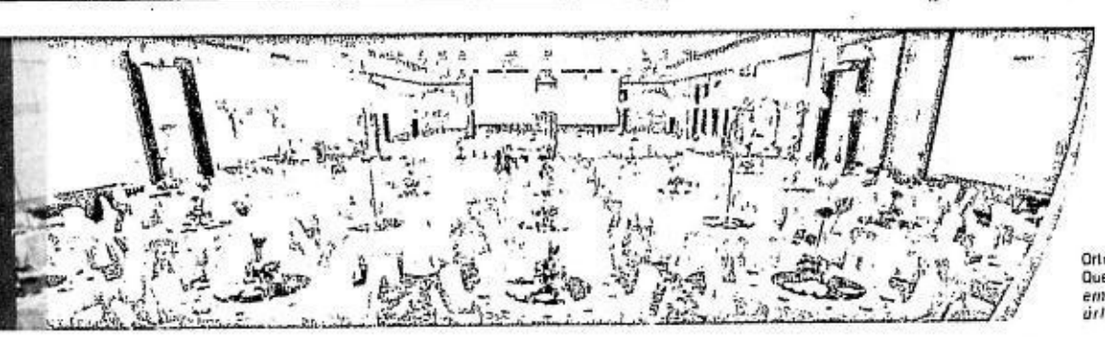

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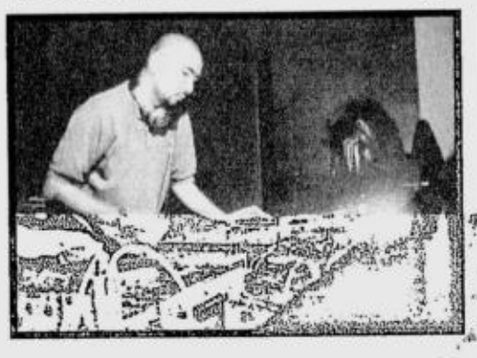

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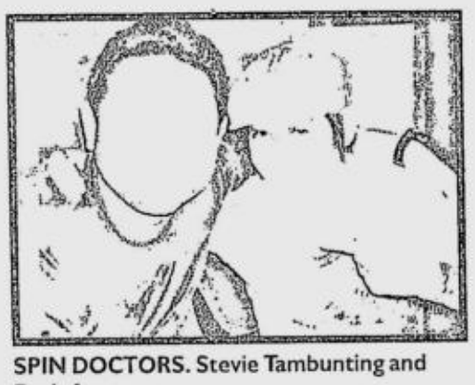

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SUPER HIPS & PEEPS

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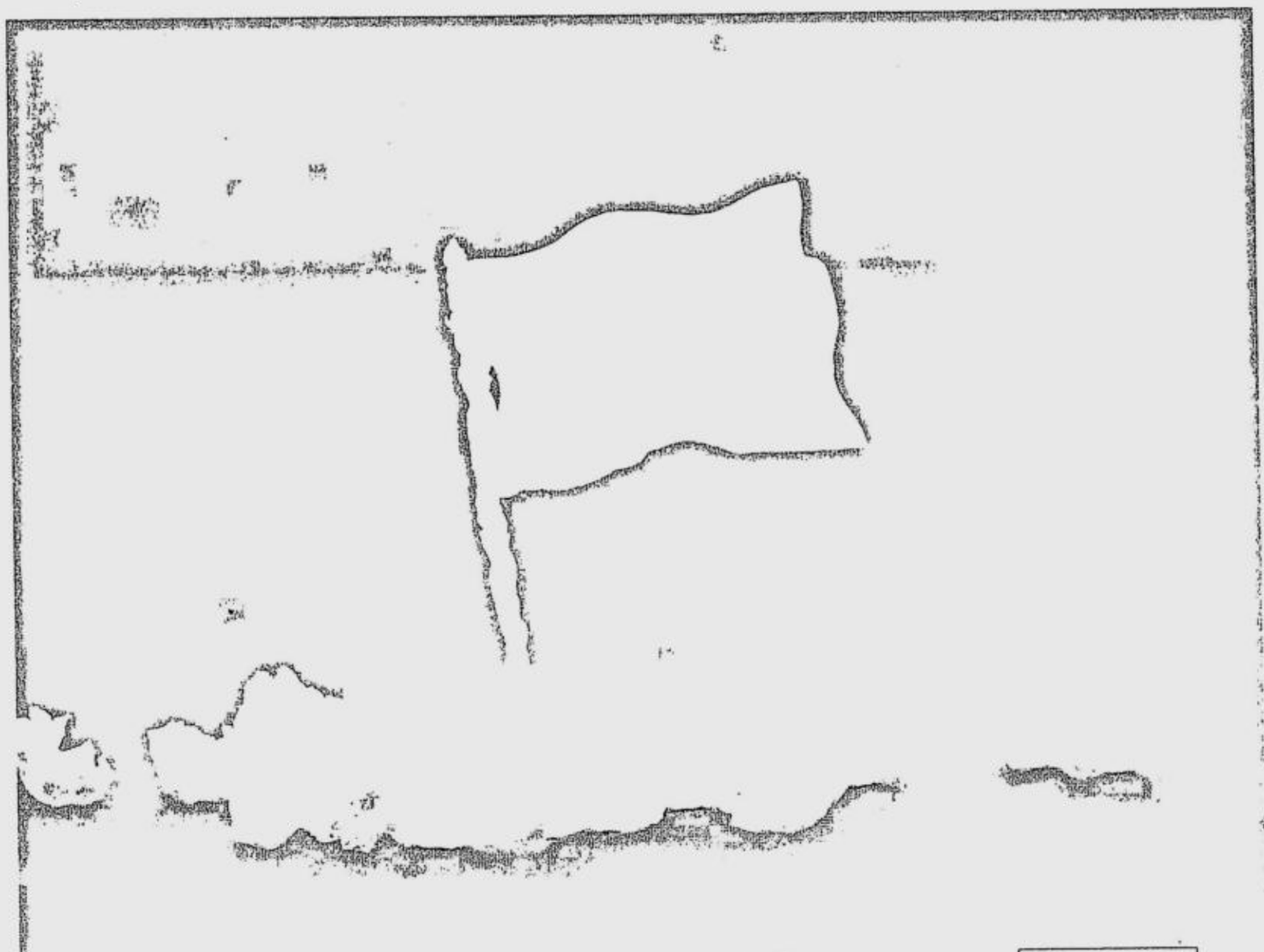

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Runny Nose	✓	✓
Itchy Eyes		✓
Fever	✓	
Sore Throat	✓	
Nasal Discharge		✓
Body aches and pains		
Trigger Causes	Viruses	Allergen (pollen, house dust mites, molds)
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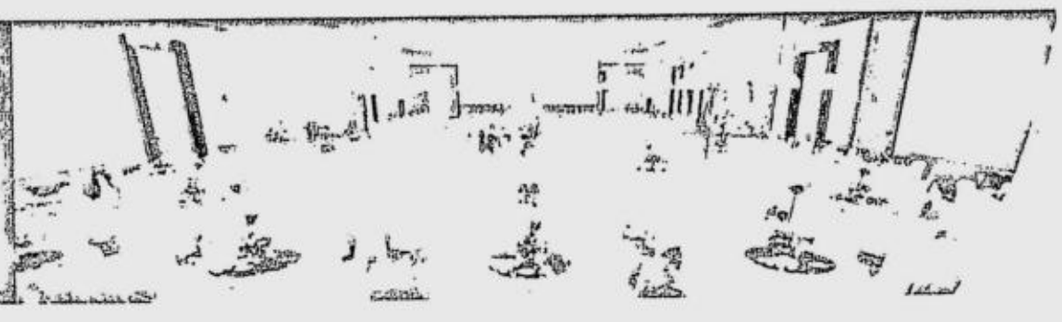

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Vilma Santos—the Star for Many More Reasons

By Nestor U. Torre

LAST MONTH, WE DISCUSSED leading female stars' "career arcs" with some show biz colleagues and most of us agreed that Vilma Santos has had the most interesting and instructive career to date—and her future prospects could be even more remarkable!

We have other outstanding female stars who've won all sorts of awards, essayed a great variety of roles with distinction, and enjoyed a nationwide influence beyond their show biz context.

Major crises

But, Vilma has done more, gone further and weathered major crises besides, so she's in a category all her own. See if you agree:

Vilma started her career as a child star, and this made her grow up in a hurry. Unlike many other child talents who stop getting offers at the onset of adolescence, Vilma kept right on working in front of the TV-movie cameras, all the way to *pang-kilig* teenybopper roles, her precocious love team with Edgar Mortiz, and young-adult roles.

Financial reverses pulled her down momentarily, but Vilma fought back and paid her debts, eliciting the admiration of entertainment industry leaders, who were surprised and gratified to see that the "cute" star had true grit going for her, as well.

Then came another challenge that threatened her career's continuing upward trajectory: Vilma had been acting her heart out in her starrers, but she always seemed to end up second-best to Nora Aunor when it came to awards.

As a result, Vilma took a hard look at her options, and decided to concentrate on relatively daring roles that Nora felt incapable of doing full justice to.

Challenging roles

This meant that Vilma would go for challenging roles like the tragic stripper in "Burlesk Queen," the demented lead in "Dama de Noche," and the modern, conflicted wife in "Relasyon!" Happily, Vilma's daring gamble worked: Viewers didn't feel that she had "cheapened" herself. Many awards came her way, and the industry finally saw Nora and Vilma as co-equal queens, not only of the box office, but also of movie awards competitions.

Later, Vilma's thespic stock went up even further when she played an activist nun in "Sister Stella L." Not only did the difficult role stretch Vilma's limits, but it also made her "relevant" in terms of social issues, as "Minsa'y Isang Gamu-Gamo" had earlier done for Nora.

ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

SANTOS. Some "queenmakers" dream of next pointing her toward running for a national position.

This new sensitivity to extra-show biz concerns peaked when Vilma married rising politician, Ralph Recto. Soon, she herself ran for office, and served Lipa City well as its mayor for nine formative and affirmative years. Her constituents' approval of her tenure invited her to dream bigger in political terms, and she ended up in a hard-fought campaign that made her the governor of Batangas province.

Sure, Vilma's focus on politics for the past decades has limited her show biz involvement, but her colleagues have supported her in her new endeavor, because she has proven that some stars can do more than entertain.

Female TV-movie luminary

Yes, male stars like Fernando Poe Jr. and Joseph Estrada have done the same, but it's gratifying to see that a female TV-movie luminary like Vilma can also serve the nation.

To date, Vilma's political posts have been local and provincial in nature, but her recent triumph at the polls has made some "queenmakers" dream of next pointing her toward running for a national position—as senator, or even higher!

At the moment, this sounds like a fantasy, but stranger things have been known to happen in this country, where show biz and politics are—very comfortable bedfellows!

Tandem

It's interesting to note that, some years ago, we saw the Ralph-Vilma tandem eventually contesting the top post in the land with Kiko-Sharon, Mar-Korina, or other, yet-unheralded politics-and-show biz pairings. —And now? Will it be *Vilma*-Ralph, instead?

In any case, Vilma has been scrupulously learning her political lessons, so she could decide to take the "big step" without waiting for another decade to elapse.

Adding to her confidence is the fact that, although she's rarely seen on the big and small screen these days, she remains a popular star and her movies have continued to hit it big at the box office—evincing a popularity that she can make full use of in a national election.

So, will she, or won't she? Whatever the future holds, Vilma is our leading female TV-movie luminary to date—and the Star for All Seasons is now also the Star for Many More Reasons!

GERONIMO. Evolving musical maturity.

Sarah Geronimo sings her age in 'Taking Flight'

By Rito P. Asilo

IN HER FOURTH STUDIO ALbum, "Taking Flight," Sarah Geronimo continues to show off the confident streak and musical maturity first heard in last year's "Becoming."

Indeed, the singing champ's first two albums, "Popstar" and "Sweet Sixteen," boasted of a repertoire that included radio-friendly tunes like "Forever's Not Enough" and lung-busting covers of pop-rock favorites like "I Wanna Know What Love Is."

Vocal bravado

Initially, no amount of vocal bravado could give the young singer the lived-in sensibility and vocal pizzazz that her first recording efforts—despite their chart-topping popularity and brisk sales—sorely lacked.

In the past year, however, the affable pop princess has subtly shown that there is more to her than her Pied Piper-like ability to turn sappy lyrics and hum-worthy melodies into bestselling hits.

Even local music's top composers are taking notice of Sarah's newfound confidence: Louie Ocampo, for instance, contributes two songs to "Taking Flight"—the soothing "I'll Be Alright" (co-written with Edith Gallardo) and the sedate "Close to My Heart."

True Faith's Medwin Marfil also lends Sarah his musical wit and feel for pop culture in the winsome "Ikaw."

Rebel Madagasang adds the rousingly anthemic "I'll Be Here," which shows off Sarah's well-limned vocal, emotional and melodic shifts, as well as the radio-friendly "Time to Let Go," an exquisitely arranged duet with constant collaborator, Mark Bautista.

SARAH/ E2

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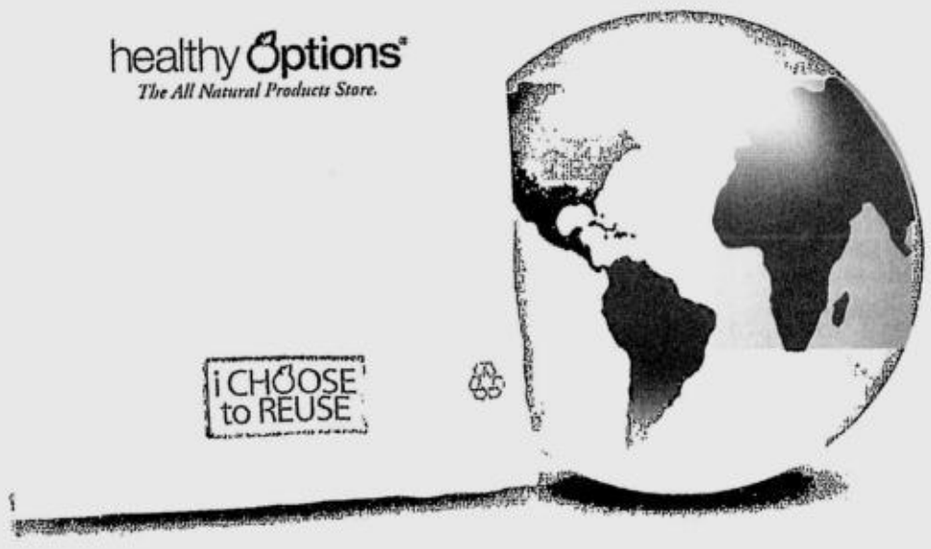

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Triumphant finale for action-packed spy franchise

By Noelani Torre

DAMON. Now, he's lost not just his memory, but his girl, as well.

"THE BOURNE ULtimatum," the third and last installment in the Bourne film series, is literally breathtaking. Moving as fast as the bullet that zips from the barrel of an assassin's gun, this action thriller will have you waiting with bated breath at the edge of your seat as action sequences run their fast and furious course before your eyes. So, catch your breath when you can, and don't keel over in excitement—because you don't want to miss a second of this exhilarating movie!

Directed by Paul Greengrass ("Bourne Supremacy," "United 93"), the film brings back *über*-spy Jason Bourne, who now has lost not just his memory, but his girl, as well.

All he wants to do now is find out how and why he became so accomplished at bashing heads, shooting people, and outsmarting sophisticated intelligence networks.

Amnesiac sleuth

The talented Matt Damon once again resumes his role as the brooding and amnesiac sleuth, who's even broodier the third time around—with eyes that seem to have sunk deeper into his skull.

As he has proven since the start of the series, Damon shows that he can rise above his boy-next-door looks, making them work for him, instead of against him. Damon's Bourne is a decent person at heart—but he's in the process of rediscovering himself. At the same time, he kicks major ass—and he's pretty believable at it!

Speaking of kicking and other violent activities, there is, as expected, quite a lot of that going on in "Ultimatum."

Violence

Unlike most action flicks, however, the violence here is neither gratuitous nor depicted in the usual slick, arcade game-like style.

Director Greengrass drags his audience right into the fight scenes, so we can hear every painful grunt and the sound of flesh hitting flesh. This is no "The Matrix"—everything in the action sequences looks real! And when people die, it's not an event you can easily dismiss!

Essentially, however, the third "Bourne" installment is a chase movie. Jason goes after the people who appear to have knowledge of his past, and they're running from other people who don't want that information leaked. These shady figures chase after Bourne to eliminate the threat he creates (read: to kill him).

Yes, it sounds like the movie's good and bad guys run around in circles, but though there's a lot of location-hopping here—from Moscow, London and Turin to Tangier and New York—the story's multiple storylines are tightly woven together, leaving the audience with hardly any breathing room, and keeping the movie going at a consistently fast pace.

Adrenaline-driven

This is exactly how action thrillers should be, but seldom are: Taut, intelligent and adrenaline-driven. Though the movie's action set pieces rapidly follow each other, they never become homogeneous—they stand out, and you can distinctly remember each one long after the film is over.

—Thank goodness "The Bourne Ultimatum" wasn't infected with the year's disappointing-threequel virus!

Sarah Geronimo . . . From page E1

It's also great to hear the young chanteuse singing Trina Belamide's more-than-merely-fluffy love songs. The 11-track lineup includes the talented composer's "So" and "What If I," which are, in terms of range, melodically subtler than her more popular compositions ("Shine"). They are nevertheless unconventional musical charmers that grow on you upon repeated spins in the CD player.

This time, Sarah also dabbles in songs that fit her youth: The noteworthy cut, "I'm Sorry," one of the album's best and most vocally challenging tracks, is Soc Villanueva and Jungee Marcelo's lyrically sumptuous collaboration.

Drizzle Nuniz's "Mr. Deadma" is a playful ditty that allows the singer to sing and act her age—and effectively strips Sarah of her artistically cautious demeanor.

Artistic persona

Chuckie Dreyfus reinvents his artistic persona—from precocious child actor to competent songwriter—by contributing two of "Taking Flight's" more notable numbers: The upbeat track, "Miss," and the lineup's winning last song, "Kahit Na," which add a youthful appeal to Sarah's bravely all-original compilation.

Let's hear it for artistic reinvention!

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4 RUSH HOUR - 3

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3 A LOVE STORY
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) RUSH HOUR - 3
5 RESERVED

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4 (DOLBY DTS) A LOVE STORY
5 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) SURF'S UP
6 (DOLBY SDDS) RUSH HOUR - 3
7 (DOLBY DIGITAL EX) BOURNE ULTIMATUM
8 (DTS) OUIJA
9 (DOLBY DIGITAL) RATATOUILLE
10 (DOLBY DIGITAL) RISE

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4 A LOVE STORY

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Lianas MovieCity
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1:00 2 DAYS IN PARIS	12:30 CINTA	12:30 HERE TO STAY
3.30 PARIS JE T'AIME	2:30 DON	3:00 OFFSCREEN
8:30 THE GURU	6.00 BOSS OF IT ALL	5:00 VOLVER
	8:00 THE BUBBLE	7:30 PAIN THINGS

MALL 5

1	OUIJA BOARD 12.30 / 2.30 / 4.30 / 6.30 / 8:30	2	RUSH HOUR 3 12:05 R2 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25	3	BOURNE ULTIMATUM 12:30 / 3.00 / 5:30 / 8:00
4	RISE 12:00 / 2:10 / 4:20 / 6:30 / 8:40	5	A LOVE STORY 1:00 / 3:30 / 6:00 / 8:30		

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Kitchen for a cause

THE VARGAS family served up scrumptious butter cakes.

STREET SMART

Mandy Navasero

OVER THE WEEKend, ICanServe and ABS-CBN Publishing hosted Pink Kitchen, a special food-and-drink affair held from 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. at the Rockwell Tent.

The gastronomic treats came from Pampanga and Laguna. From the best restaurants in Manila came Moroccan, French, Thai, Italian, Cuban and Indian dishes and sandwiches.

One hundred fifty students from Endurun College volunteered as waiters and food servers—they must have served over 10,000 guests in two days!

I patronized the *bangus* booth of TV chef, Myrna Seguismundo, Titania Wine Cellar's "Bella Mia" red wine, and the Vargas Kitchen's scrumptious butter cake (call 810-7529).

Gorgeous setting

On the first day, Rockwell Tent was teeming with beautiful people. Jing Jing Vasquez of Vazbuilt commented: "I don't usually stay at an event for four hours, but I truly enjoyed attending Pink Kitchen because I saw a lot of friends —not to mention the gorgeous setting!"

The following day, I saw even more people. They were there to support ICanServe, a foundation put up by journalist Kara Magsanoc-Alikpala, who is herself a breast cancer survivor. Guests included Dr. Teyet Pascual, Mrs. Imelda R. Marcos, Irene Marcos-Araneta and Monique Villonco.

The foundation aims to empower women with information on breast cancer and to help subsidize cancer treatment of women. It will pioneer the country's first nationwide Early Breast Cancer Detection program.

E-mail icanserve@yahoo.com, or visit www.icanserve.net.

KARA (right) with guests Minnie Jentes and Imelda Marcos.

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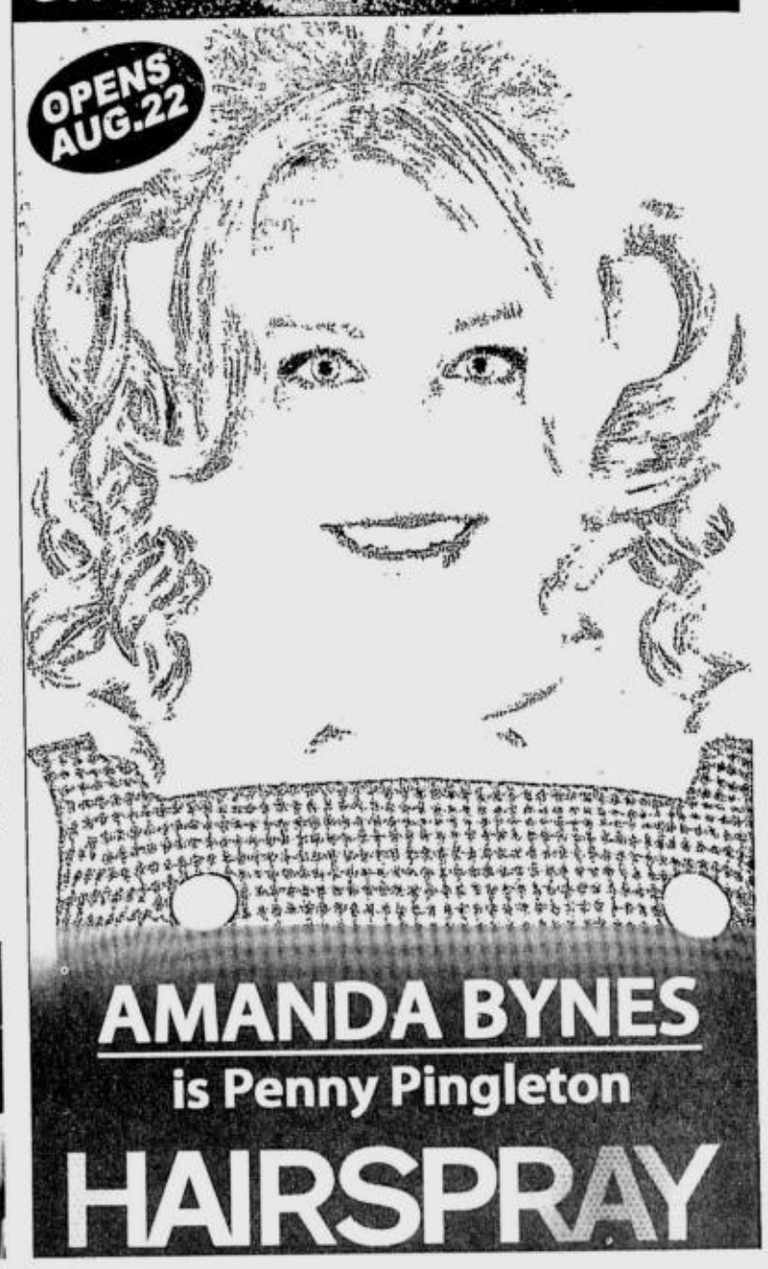

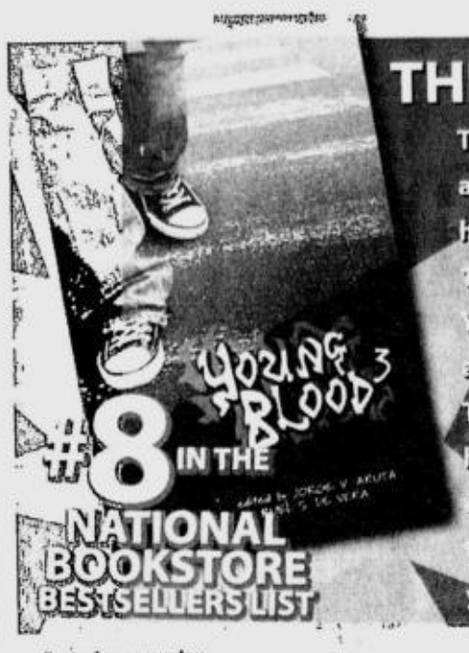

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	4 THE LOOKOUT	5 SURF'S UP	6 RUSH HOUR 3	7 THE SIMPSONS
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	3 RATATOUILLE GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SURF'S UP GUARANTEED SEATS	5 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM GUARANTEED SEATS	
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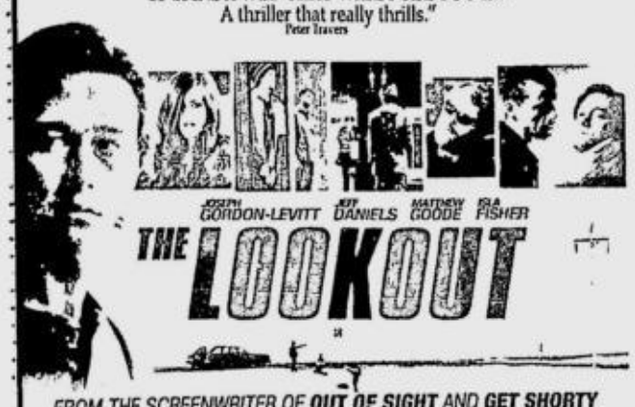

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RICHARD NIXON: "A MASTERPIECE. ★★★★! I LOVED THIS MOVIE. AN ACCOMPLISHED WORK OF ART." Chicago Sun-Times

USA TODAY "★★★★! A HAUNTING, ENGROSSING AND INTELLIGENT THRILLER. Director Scott Frank spins a web of intrigue and deceit, artfully blending pulse-stopping, nerve-jangling suspense with sharp dialogue and nuanced portrayals. Joseph Gordon-Levitt's performance is captivating." Claudia Puig

Los Angeles Times "... A REAL PLEASURE TO WATCH... ... A SKILLFULL THRILLER." Kenneth Turan

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Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala

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Greenbelt	Shop & Travel at Greenbelt 1 Promo Get a chance to win exciting prizes and a trip for two to Boracay for every P300 worth of purchase at any Greenbelt 1 establishment from July 1 to September 30, 2007
Alabang Town Center	Mechanical Action August 17 to 19; 11 am, 3 pm & 6 pm at the Activity Center
Ayala Center Cebu	Uyfang Kiosk August 3 to 30, 2007 at the AFEC Access
Market! Market!	Veggie Superkids August 18, 2007 at the Activity Center
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents Disney's CINDERELLA Kids at REP's Globe Theater - Opens August 11, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710
Ayala Museum	Elements Photoconstructed Realities August 16 to 29, 2007 For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
TriNoma	NU 107: Pocket Concert 07 August 23, 2007 at the Activity Center Luxury Car Exhibits August 24 to 30, 2007 at the Activity Center

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PER DTI-NCR Permit No. A2-273, Series of 2007.

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! TriNoma

SATURDAY*Special*

Kaisa stages glittering musical revue

GIFTED Chinese-Filipino actor-singers topbill "Kaisa Ka!" show—(clockwise from top) Helen Lim Benoza, Daphne Chiu, Lorraine Teng, Sherwin Sozon, Lizabeth Valerie Yap and Eva Marie Poon.

KAISA PARA SA KAUNLARAN celebrates its 20th anniversary with the major theatrical event, "Tsinoy: Kaisa Ka!," to be presented on Sept. 14 and 15 at the Awat Keng Auditorium, Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center, Intramuros, Manila.

"Tsinoy: Kaisa Ka!" presents a prismatic view of the Chinese-Filipino experience in the Philippines—its history, heroic sacrifices by Chinese-Filipinos like Jose Rizal and Gen. Ignacio Paua, issues and quandaries, and current contributions by its many volunteers in different spheres of society.

ANDY Bais (in chef's uniform, center), regales delighted cast members with his musical tribute to Chinese cuisine.

Deeply dramatic

Numbers range from the deeply dramatic to breezy fun, interwoven by music beautifully composed by Jun Murillo.

The entertaining and insightful musical revue is written and directed by Nestor U. Torre, whose other musical productions like "Magnificat," "Magsimula Ka," "Birhen ng Casaysay," and "Pag-ibig sa Bayan" have reaped acclaim and have been shown all over the country.

The show topbills gifted Chinoy performers like Sherwin Sozon, Daphne Chiu, Helen Lim Benoza, Eva Marie Poon, Paul Kelvin Ong, Lizabeth Valerie Yap, Lorraine Teng, Edwin Tan and Ang Chak Chi.

They are performing in close artistic collaboration with exceptional Philippine theater artists like Rito Asilo, Andy Bais, Nelson Caruncho, Estanislao Alinea, Robbie Feliongco, Jan Alexander, Russel Magno and Cecil, Roy, Roychelle and Mica Torre. Choreography is by Torre, Asilo and Marlon Tsoko Capati.

Both cast and production staffers have been rehearsing intensely to do justice to the musical revue's significant and important theme: The fusion and integration of Chinoys and Pinoys for the country's greater good.

Cameo appearances

Production design is by Leo Rialp, an acclaimed director and visual artist in his own right. Lights are by Martin Esteva. Lyrics are by Torre, Asilo and Noelani Torre, Cameo appearances will be made by leading Chinoy personalities like Jose Mari Chan, to further underscore the Chinese-Filipino community's deep involvement in Kaisa projects.

On its 10th anniversary, Kaisa presented "Tsinoy: Mga Anak ng Bayan" to great acclaim. Proceeds of that show went to the building of the Kaisa Heritage Center, which houses the Bahay Tsinoy: A Museum of the Chinese in Philippine Life, the Kaisa Research and Data Bank Center, Chinben See Memorial Library, Awat Keng Auditorium, and the Tsinoys in Nation Building Gallery.

Viability

This 20th anniversary show will raise funds for the continuing viability of the Bahay Tsinoy Museum and support the staggering cost of maintaining the Center.

For tickets to "Tsinoy: Kaisa Ka's!" Sept. 14 and 15 performances, call 527-6083, 526-6796 or 482-0512, or e-mail kaisa@philonline.com. The Kaisa-Angelo King Heritage Center is located at No. 32 Anda corner Cabildo sts., Intramuros, Manila. Repeats are scheduled on Nov. 4 and 6.

Weathering storms

LOTUS POND

R. Valencia and S. Bismark

STORMS ARE weather disturbances that disrupt man's normal life. But, other types of storms have the same effect:

The Storm of Anger causes destruction and ruination. It must not be allowed to build up and gain strength. It can be controlled by humility and love. It's a storm that also causes self-destruction, so great care must be taken to monitor it. Avoid feeding its destructive strength with pride, envy and greed.

The Storm of Confusion is caused by ignorance and illusion. Persons who don't seek or accept the Absolute Truth tend to be its victims. In times of mounting problems and crises, this causes people to run around in all directions.

Spiritual enlightenment

We are battered by ever-changing thoughts, emotions and desires. Winds easily change their speed and direction. Don't feed their power with lies, senseless ideas, fantasies and mundane thoughts. Drive them away with wisdom and spiritual enlightenment.

The Storm of Self-Pity is caused by false humility and obsession with one's problems—it is self-destructive! It draws focus on itself, sucks the energy of those around it, and magnifies problems. Don't feed it with sympathy. Solutions are found in spiritual love and the Supreme Power.

As a general rule, don't create your own storm. If there's one hovering around, be ready to deal with it wisely. Last but not least, storms eventually pass. Seek the eternal—and rise above any storm!

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SATURDAY *Special*

WITH MCQUEEN in Paris in 1965.

Fil-Am actresses should vie for role of Steve McQueen's wife

THE REISSUE cover of Neile's book, "My Husband, My Friend," which is being developed into a movie.

LOS ANGELES—MANILA-BORN NEILE McQueen Toffel announced last Wednesday that her popular book, "My Husband, My Friend," which chronicles her life with the late Steve McQueen, has been optioned to be made into a movie.

Also known as Neile Adams, the entertainer and author, who is said to be related to Philippine show biz's Salvador clan, announced through a publicist that New Line's Kevin Kasha is developing a big-screen adaptation of their book.

Fil-Am actresses, take note—Neile's statement to the media included the following: "A search is now underway to cast actors who will portray the enduring screen icon, Steve McQueen, and his former wife, Neile McQueen Toffel, who is the mother of the actor's children and was by his side for 15 years during the production of all of his major films."

Entertainer

Since a role like this doesn't come up in Hollywood every day, Fil-Am actresses who fit the bill should audition to play Neile. Actresses who want to portray the entertainer would be wise to start reading "My Husband, My Friend."

The memoir, described as Neile's "story on the exhilarating yet turbulent life with her matinee-idol husband," has been reissued by AuthorHouse to mark its 20th publishing anniversary.

Neile's young life was just as dramatic. Born in the Philippines to a mother who was an entertainer known as "Miami, the Pearl of the Orient," she survived a Japanese prison camp in Manila during World War II. No less than General Douglas McArthur reportedly helped Neile and her mother emigrate to the US.

Despite her age, Neile still stages cabaret shows at intimate venues across the US, and has four CDs of show tunes and standards. We watched her for the first time many years ago when she performed at the Hollywood Roosevelt Hotel's now-defunct Cinegrill (where Michelle Pfeiffer sang on top of a baby grand piano in that memorable scene from "The Fabulous Baker Boys").

NEILE TODAY: Still active in show business, she has her own cabaret show and four CDs of standards and show tunes.

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Ruben V. Nepales

Onstage, she was ageless as she interpreted Broadway show tunes and standards. As she had in the '60s, Neile still wears her hair short, with the characteristic bangs. The multi-talented Neile had the distinction of dancing the Bob Fosse classic, "Steam Heat," in the original Broadway production of "The Pajama Game."

In the book, Neile revealed the ups and downs of living with the actor—including Steve's womanizing! Their marriage produced a daughter, Terry (who died in 1998) and a son, Chad.

Divorce

After the couple's divorce in 1972, Steve went through two more marriages—to actress Ali McGraw and model Barbara Minty. In interviews, Neile claims she does not hold any grudge against Ali. Since his death in 1980 at age 50, Steve has gained an iconic status that he did not achieve when he was still alive.

Neile plans to supervise the filming to make sure that the appropriate tone of her book is maintained when it is adapted for the big screen.

In another interview, she said, "The reason why this book has never been (adapted for the big screen) is because of my need to have creative control. Young producers these days don't have enough life experience, so they would go for the parts where there's womanizing, drugs and violence.

"I know that is what's going to happen, because I've had talks with them—and those things were all they could see! They forget that the thrust of this tale is the love story between two people—the other things are just a sidebar!"

***

Kingsley remains protective of clients

At the Beverly Hills luncheon that we mentioned in yesterday's column, we sat beside Pat Kingsley, the doyenne of Hollywood film publicity. She is one of this town's most powerful women. The founder of PMK (which stands for her initials), one of Tinseltown's top publicity firms, Kingsley is a Hollywood veteran who has worked with the likes of Frank Sinatra, Doris Day and Natalie Wood.

These days, Pat represents some of Hollywood's biggest stars—from Jodie Foster to Tom Hanks. When Pat learned that we were from Asia, she said that the hottest day she has ever experienced—literally—was when she was in Singapore with ex-client Tom Cruise to attend a movie premiere.

Pat recounted Singapore's scorching weather, and how Tom, despite sweating

FIL-AM/ F2

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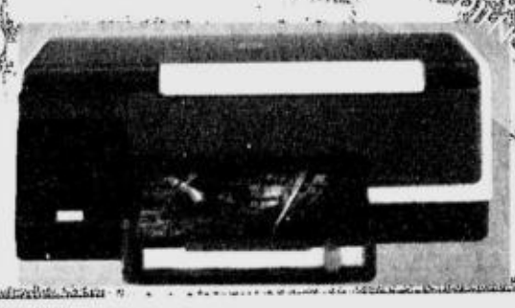

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HARRY POTTER 5 4:00PM 8:30PM

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1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 SURF'S UP
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 BLADES OF GLORY
5 OUIJA
6 RISE

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1 A LOVE STORY
2 RUSH HOUR 3
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
5 A LOVE STORY
6 SURF'S UP
7 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
8 RUSH HOUR 3
9 OUIJA
10 BLADES OF GLORY
11 RISE
12 A LOVE STORY

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 SURF'S UP
3 A LOVE STORY
4 A LOVE STORY
5 OUIJA
6 RUSH HOUR 3
7 RATATOUILLE
8 RISE
9 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
10 A LOVE STORY
11 SIMPSONS MOVIE
12 BLADES OF GLORY

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749

1 RISE
2 A LOVE STORY
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 RUSH HOUR 3
5 RATATOUILLE
6 SURF'S UP
7 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
8 A LOVE STORY
9 OUIJA
10 HARRY POTTER 5
11 BLADES OF GLORY
12 SINKING OF JAPAN

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 RISE
3 A LOVE STORY
4 A LOVE STORY
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 HARRY POTTER 5
7 BLADES OF GLORY
8 RATATOUILLE
9 OUIJA
10 SURF'S UP

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488

1 RUSH HOUR 3
2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
3 RISE
4 SURF'S UP
5 OUIJA
6 A LOVE STORY

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
5 BLADES OF GLORY
6 OUIJA
7 SURF'S UP
8 A LOVE STORY
9 RISE

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 RISE
3 A LOVE STORY
4 RUSH HOUR 3
5 SURF'S UP
6 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
7 THREE
8 BLADES OF GLORY
9 A LOVE STORY
10 OUIJA
11 HARRY POTTER 5
12 RATATOUILLE

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4323201-04

1 RUSH HOUR 3
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 RUSH HOUR 3
3 A LOVE STORY
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975

1 SURF'S UP
2 A LOVE STORY
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 BOURNE ULTIMATUM

movietime

Fresh New Movie

From the creators of "Open Season" comes another animated movie about a teenage penguin and his dream of becoming a big wave in the world of surfing.

"Surf's Up" rides on the reality bandwagon, as it chronicles the life of a teenage penguin named Cody Maverick, from his humble beginnings at Shiverpool, Antartica to his trip to Pen Gu Island for the much-anticipated Big Z Memorial Surf Off. There he meets personalities such as Sheboygan surfer Chicken Joe, promoter Reggie Belafonte, talent scout Mikey Abromowitz, and spirited lifeguard Lani Allikai, who all believe in his great talent waiting to be developed.

Cody believes that the immense success will make him get everything he deserves, but this mentality changes when he meets a senior surfer along the way.

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1 SURF'S UP
2 A LOVE STORY
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 RISE
5 RUSH HOUR 3
6 A LOVE STORY
7 OUIJA
8 BOURNE ULTIMATUM

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 SURF'S UP
3 OUIJA
4 BLADES OF GLORY
5 A LOVE STORY
6 LICENSE TO WED

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04

1 BLADES OF GLORY
2 A LOVE STORY
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85

1 OUIJA
2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
3 SURF'S UP
4 A LOVE STORY
5 LICENSE TO WED
6 A LOVE STORY

SM CIY LIPA (043) 784-0187

1 SINKING OF JAPAN
2 BLADES OF GLORY
3 A LOVE STORY
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80

1 A LOVE STORY
2 BLADES OF GLORY
3 FRACTURE
4 SURF'S UP

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 BLADES OF GLORY

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5349811

1 SURF'S UP
2 LICENSE TO WED
3 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 A LOVE STORY

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998

1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 SURF'S UP
3 A LOVE STORY
4 BLADES OF GLORY
5 A LOVE STORY
6 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884

1 BLADES OF GLORY
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SURF'S UP
4 RUSH HOUR 3

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422

1 RATATOUILLE
2 SURF'S UP
3 RUSH HOUR 3
4 A LOVE STORY
5 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
6 BLADES OF GLORY
7 RESERVED
8 OSS 117

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876

1 RUSH HOUR 3
2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
3 SURF'S UP
4 BLADES OF GLORY
5 A LOVE STORY
6 OUIJA
7 A LOVE STORY
8 BOURNE ULTIMATUM

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010

1 A LOVE STORY
2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM
3 SURF'S UP
4 RUSH HOUR 3

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1 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM • THX
2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30

2 A LOVE STORY
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

3 MOONRISE FILM FESTIVAL
12:00 2:00 4:20 6:10 8:00

4 SURF'S UP
11:25 1:30 3:35 5:40 7:45 9:50

5 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

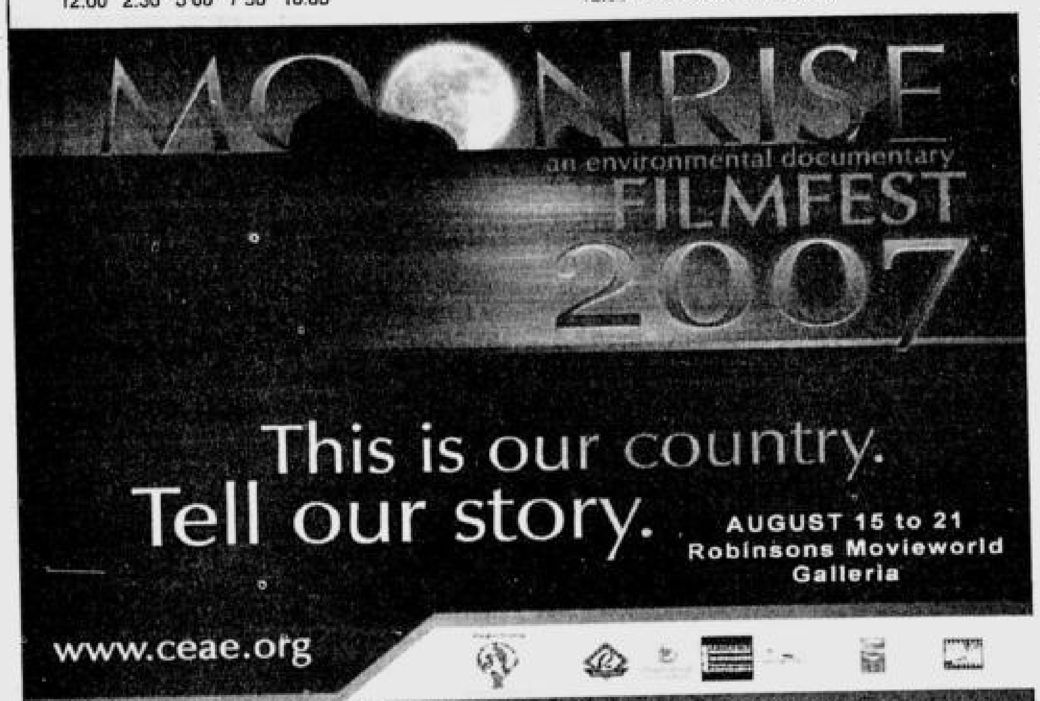
6 RUSH HOUR 3
1:20 3:30 5:40 7:50 10:00

7 RISE
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

8 RATATOUILLE
12:30 2:45 5:00 7:15 9:30

9 OUIJA
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40

10 RUSH HOUR 3
12:50 3:00 5:10 7:20 9:30



ERMITA

Ticket Price: P110 / P120

1 A LOVE STORY
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

2 OUIJA
12.00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

3 SURF'S UP
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

4 RUSH HOUR 3
12:45 3:00 5:15 7:30 10:00

5 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
12:35 3:00 5:25 7:45 10:00

6 RISE
12.00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

7 MORENO
1:00 2:40 4:30 6:20 8:10 10:00

METRO EAST

Ticket Price: P100 / P110 682-3193 • 682-8199

1 SURF'S UP
12:30 2:40 4:50 7:00 9:10

2 A LOVE STORY
1:00 3:40 6:20 9.00

3 A LOVE STORY
10:20 1:00 3:40 6:20

4 RISE
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

5 RUSH HOUR 3
12:20 2:30 4:40 6:50 9:00

6 RATATOUILLE
12:45 3:30 6:15 9:00

7 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
11:00 1:25 3.50 6:20 9.00

8 OUIJA
12:10 2:25 4:40 6:55 9:10

ACTIVITIES

AUGUST 18 (3:00PM) – "SURF'S UP" Mall Show
*Dance Number *Meet & Greet / Photo Op with Cody
*Surfing Clinic by Stonemoney *Games and Raffle
Robinsons Metro East Mall Activity Area

AUGUST 19 (3:00 – 6:00PM) – "Surf's Up" Meet & Greet Cody
Robinsons Pioneer
Cinema Lobby

NOVALICHES

Ticket Price: P90 / P100 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 A LOVE STORY
2 SURF'S UP
3 RISE
4 RUSH HOUR 3
5 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
6 OUIJA

PIONEER

Ticket Price: [illegible] 687-6378

1 A LOVE STORY
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

2 SURF'S UP
12:25 2:30 4:35 6:40 8:40

3 RUSH HOUR 3
4:20 6:30

4 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
1:00 3:30 6:00 8:30

STA. ROSA

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1 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 SURF'S UP
3 LICENSE to WED
4 A LOVE STORY

LIPA

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1 SURF'S UP
2 A LOVE STORY
3 SINKING of JAPAN
4 CASA

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1 SURF'S UP
2 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
3 A LOVE STORY
4 RUSH HOUR 3

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1 SURF'S UP
2 A LOVE STORY
3 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
4 RUSH HOUR 3

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1 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
2 A LOVE STROY
3 LICENSE to WED
4 SURF'S UP

TARLAC

1 A LOVE STORY
2 THE SIMPSONS
3 LICENSE to WED

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1 CASA
2 A LOVE STORY
3 LICENSE to WED
4 A LOVE STORY
5 THE BOURNE ULTIMATUM
6 SURF'S UP

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4 RUSH HOUR 3
5 CAPE KARMA
6 SURF'S UP

FOSTER. One of Kingsley's clients.

Fil-Am…

From page F1

profusely in the heat, signed autographs—for an hour!

We asked Pat if she plans to write a book when she retires. She replied: "I don't think the public would be interested." *Au contraire!*

Memoir

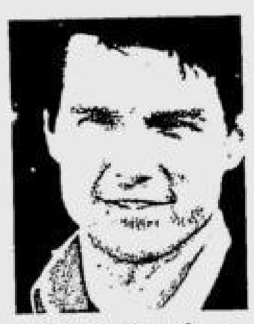
Imagine a memoir that includes a publicist's "adventures" handling stars like Frank Sinatra and Al Pacino! She, however, demurred, believing that no one is interested to read behind-the-scenes stories.

"Like, no one really wants to read about how sausages are made," she quipped. We chuckled at how charmingly she managed to make her dealings with clients like Richard Gere and Sharon Stone sound so prosaic!

Old school

Pat added that she wouldn't feel right writing about the stars who paid her to do their publicity. We told her that we admired her stance. Pat is obviously from the old school. She is legendary for being fiercely protective of her clients.

E-mail rvnepales_5585@yahoo.com, and read his blog, "The Nepales Report," on www.inquirerbloggers.net/nepalesreport.



CRUISE. Signed autographs despite Singapore's sweltering heat.

Celebrities

From page F4

know little-known facts about our country, watch 'Travel Time.' It's the only show that has consistently featured new and uniquely fascinating destinations, aside from better-known ones, and with consistent quality!"

And Dr. Jaime C. Laya sums it all up: "It's the only way to see the Philippines. We get insights we would never have, see places we would never see, taste food we would never savor—if it were not for 'Travel Time!'"

What are we waiting for? Let's go with the flow and rediscover the wonders of the Philippines, on wings of Susan Calo-Medina's "Travel Time!"

Trinidad, Ojeda transcended character stereotyping

By Behn Cervantes

TWO CHARACTER ACTORS I truly admired were Koko Trinidad and Manny Ojeda. They were always right for the roles they played.

Trinidad and Ojeda worked hard on their roles and gave them blood and guts! Both were trained actors, so they were natural when they acted.

This was not easy to accomplish, despite the claims of unenlightened souls, because there was always a need to balance technique with truth to infuse character with palpable humanity rather than theatricality.

Advertising

Both Koko and Manny were well-educated. In their heyday, they thrived in different media. Trinidad was one of the pioneers of the local radio industry, while Ojeda was recognized in the field of advertising.

The two were experienced stage actors, having worked with Bert and Daisy Avellana at the Barangay Theater Guild, back in the days when theater acting was still an endeavor that people engaged in "for love and kisses."

However, being ardent artists, they developed professional standards. With unflagging dedication, they entered a new performing arena and soon were appreciated for their seasoned skills, impeccable manners and artistic taste.

That they played well-heeled and elderly characters was not surprising. In fact, I always compared them to one of my favorite Hollywood character actors—E.J. Marshall.

Marshall was a dynamic actor on film, television and the legitimate stage. Most often, he portrayed principled characters whose opinions were difficult to sway.

Koko and Manny had Marshall's high-class traits, since both were products of the Old School—thus, they demonstrated the genteel qualities expected of Ateneo and La Salle graduates before the Pacific War.

Both portrayed dons without difficulty, because they possessed fine manners and spoke excellent English and Spanish. Of course, they also delivered their dialogue in fine Tagalog. There was nothing false about their portrayals, because they were familiar with such characteristics from their own milieu.

Memorable portrayals

However, like Marshall, Trinidad and Ojeda also portrayed darker characters when they got older. It took Lino Brocka and Mike de Leon to draw from them new and memorable portrayals when the right scripts came along.

These days, when I come across replays of old movies that cast either of them, I make sure I watch their scenes. They're still a joy to behold, no matter if they play characters who are despicable old men who look down on the poor. Trinidad and Ojeda always imbued their characters with humanity, thus making them interesting and credible despite their negative qualities.

In fact, some sequences of Trinidad and Ojeda's performances should be collected as visual aids for "How to Act" classes, so that today's youth can learn from them!

TRINIDAD AND OJEDA. Always right for the roles they played.

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 BOURNE ULTIMATUM MTRCB PG-13 11:00, 1:45 4:30, 7:15, 10:00
3 A LOVE STORY MTRCB PG-13 11:20, 2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00
2 BOURNE ULTIMATUM MTRCB PG-13 1:15, 4:00, 6:45, 9:30
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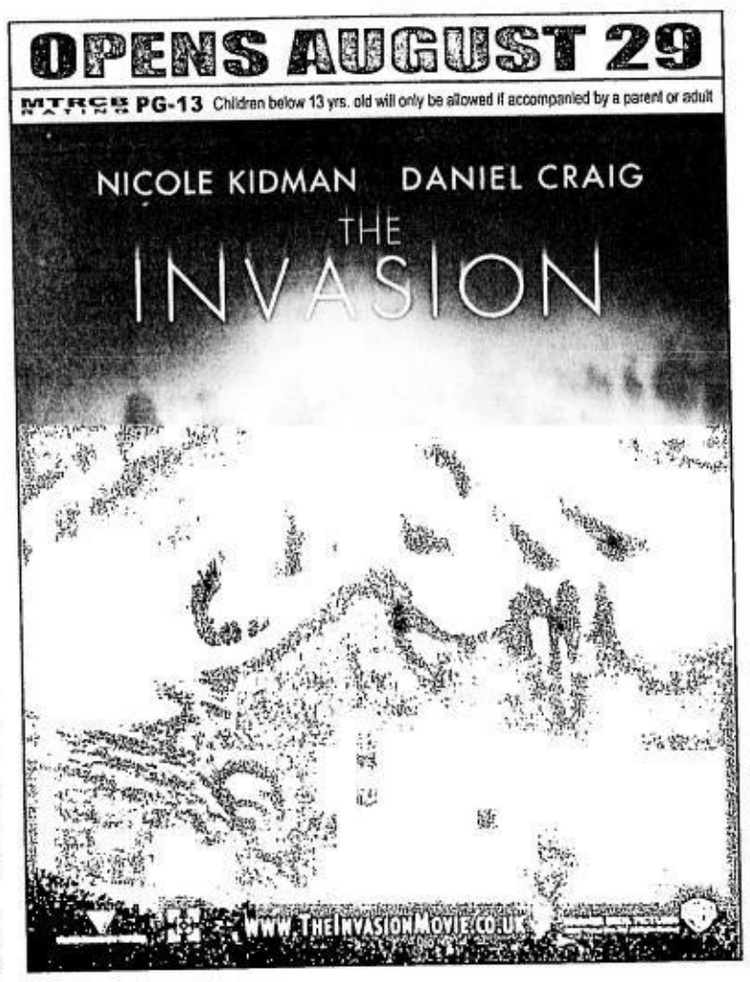

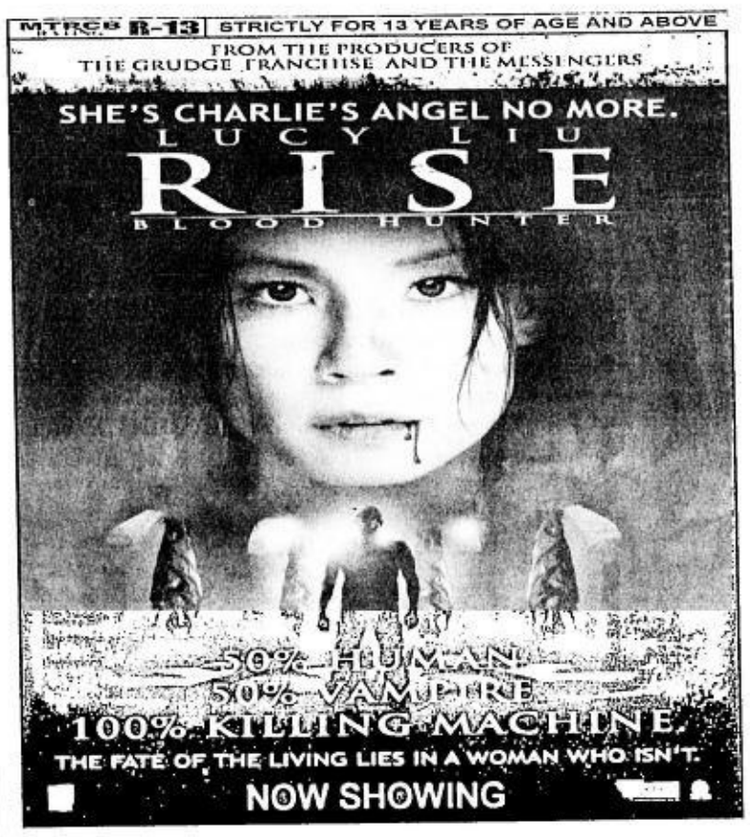

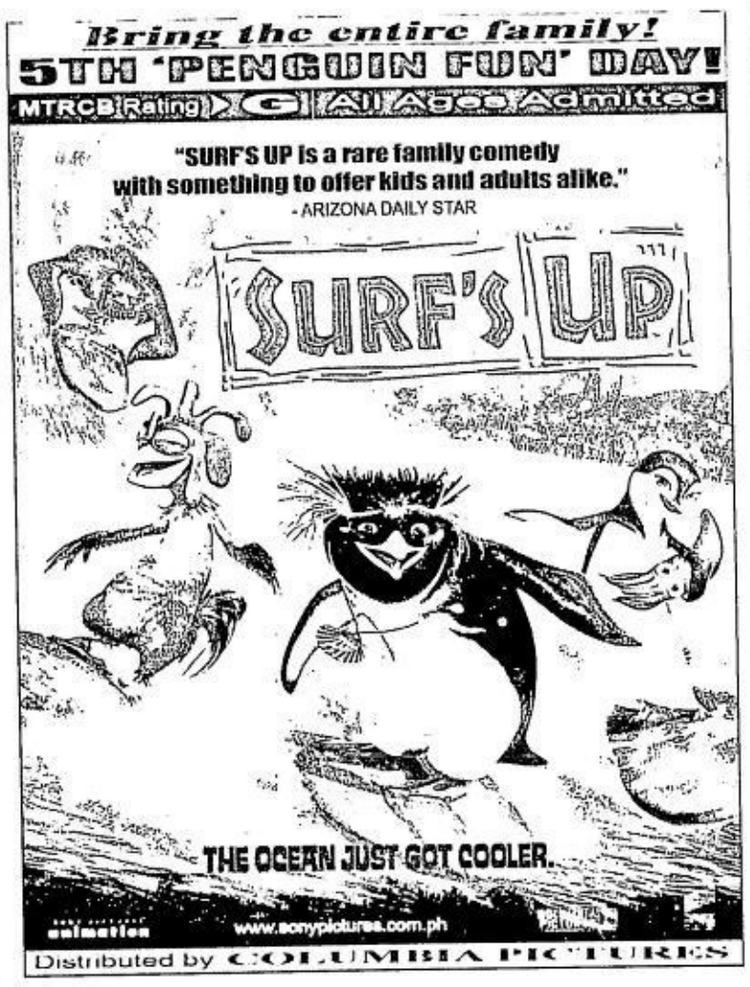

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A LOVE STORY PG13 12:10,2:40,5:10, 7:40,10:10	SURF'S UP G 12:00,2:00,4:00, 6:00,8:00	BOURNE ULTIMATUM PG13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30

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3 SURF'S UP 1:00, 2:50, 4:50, 6:50, 8:50, 10:50 G
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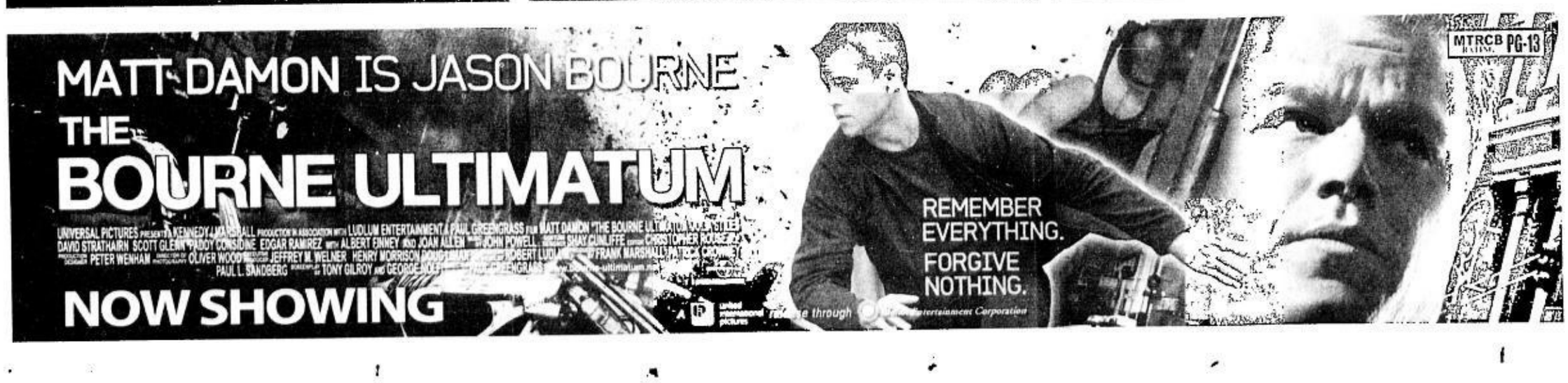

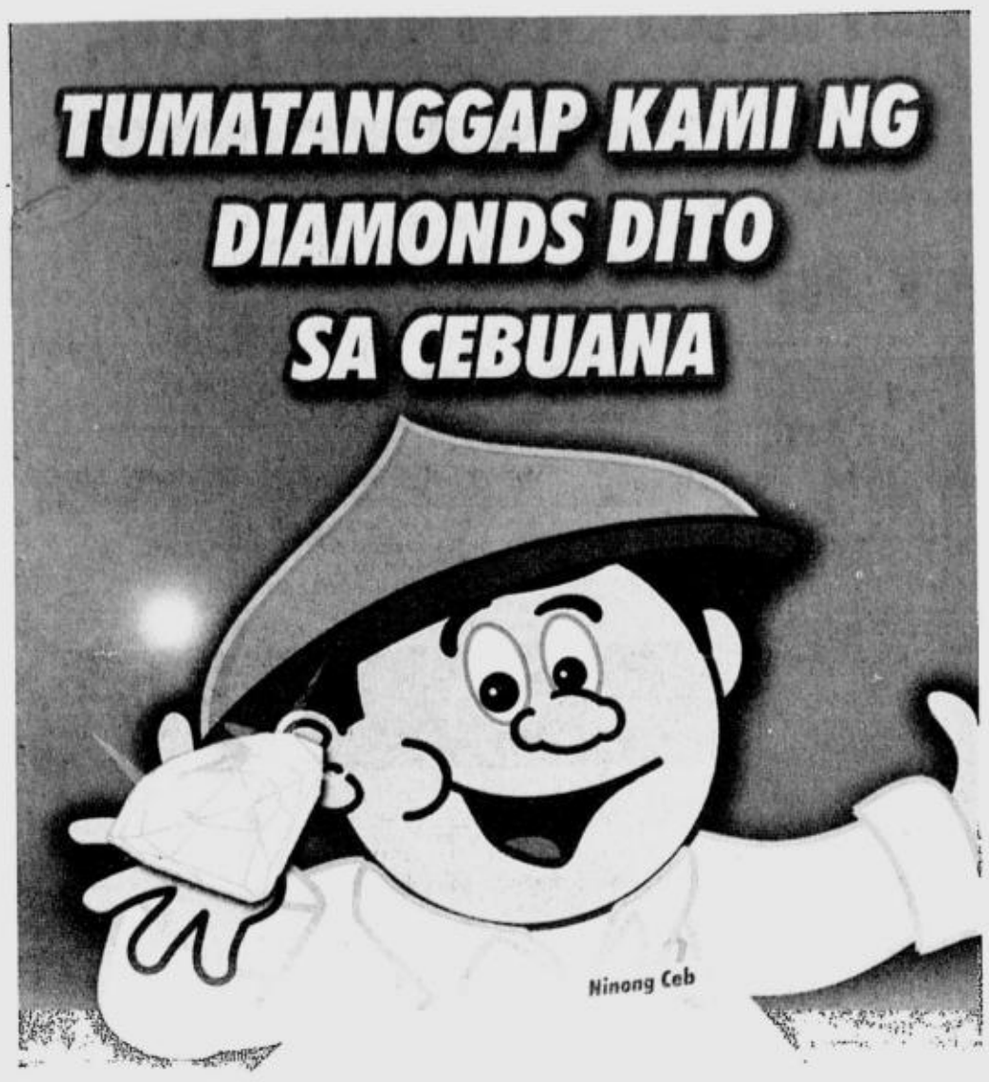

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Celebrities extol the joys of 'Travel Time'

By Nestor U. Torre

FOR MANY YEARS NOW, SUSAN Calo-Medina's visually captivating "Travel Time" TV show has regaled local armchair travelers with the beauty and richness of the country's scenic wonders. Even better, it also takes viewers off the beaten tourist track, where discoveries and adventures are even more exciting.

In addition, the show has of late been adding a "cultural tourism" component to its features, highlighting not just beautiful sights but also even more significant cultural insights.

Hospitable home

These days, "Travel Time" has found a new and hospitable home on the ANC channel (at 9:30 a.m. on Saturdays), which correctly believes that travel *is* broadening—to all of man's faculties!

Hopefully, like-minded viewers will continue to support the program with their avid patronage, so it can continue to enhance the wander- and wonder-lust of a new generation of armchair travelers.

Interestingly, a number of the show's fans don't remain merely empathetic tourists for long. The venturesome program's lively and attractive features succeed in yanking them out of their comfortable armchairs, and they soon find themselves out in the wild, blue yonder, savoring the country's touristic and cultural attractions for themselves.

CALO-MEDINA. Her TV show takes viewers off the beaten tourist track.

ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

It turned out these former-couch potatoes-turned-trekkers and spelunkers include quite a number of celebrities and luminaries, whose admiration for "Travel Time" is heartfelt:

For instance, National Artist for Literature F. Sionil Jose beams: "I'm going to Laguna because I saw it on the show. It's informative. Filipinos don't know enough about their country."

Singer-comedienne Mitch Valdes chimes in: "As a performer, you go only to the major places. Even on vacation, you go to the major destinations. But, with 'Travel Time,' you go to the nooks and crannies—places you'd never go to! Watching the show, you feel you're already there. —And the food, the food tasting!"

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani shares her upbeat view of the show: "It's intelligent. The program makes you feel you're really *there*. Basically, it's *Tita* Susan who carries the show."

Leo Martinez: "Aside from the fact that I was 'Travel Time's' first director, I like watching the show because I learn about Filipino culture. As a Unesco commissioner, I feel strongly about knowing one's culture. *Ang kultura ay pamana ng ating kagalingan at karangalan!*"

Wyngard Tracy: "I enjoy watching the show because it is informative, and the way the host presents it makes me feel I'm there."

Impy Pilapil: "It's not your usual travel show. It teaches me a lot of things about the Philippines that I didn't know."

Little-known facts

Mila Abad enthusiastically endorses the show: "If you want to

CELEBRITIES/ F2

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NOW SHOWING

Engaging performances buoy up love triangle drama

By Rito P. Asilo

"A Love Story"

D: Maryo J. delos Reyes
S: Maricel Soriano, Aga Muhlach, Angelica Panganiban

MARYO J. DELOS REYES' LATEST drama tackles a different kind of love triangle: Sparks fly when 38-year-old, happy-go-lucky businessman, Ian Montes (Aga Muhlach), meets carefree, 22-year-old flight attendant, Caryn (Angelica Panganiban). But, the excitement of romantic love soon wanes for Caryn—to Ian's dismay.

The couple's lives get even more complicated when obstetrician Joanna Villanueva (Maricel Soriano), who is herself recuperating from a devastating heartbreak, enters the picture—and clutters up the romantic frame! Then, the dramatically confounding fault-finding and finger-pointing begin...

Delos Reyes employs an intriguingly nonlinear storytelling style that could have inattentive viewers scratching their heads—in confusion and incomprehension.

But, that is one of the film's novel contextual gimmicks that set it apart from other dramatic tearjerkers. Unfortunately, Delos Reyes is unable to fully realize the potential of his glossy film's expositional style.

To be fair, the director crafts a technically polished dramatic feature that makes full use of its cast's thespic strengths: The gym-toned Aga, who has never looked so fit, embraces the soul of his character and unleashes his full dramatic chops. Once again, he demonstrates that he is his generation's best actor.

Maricel also manages to rein in her tendency to resort to her well-known vein-popping dramatic style. The actress even looks like a real obstetrician—which is no mean feat. A number of scenes show how she has developed a dramatic depth that goes beyond the ability to cry buckets of tears. (Unfortunately, she doesn't have much chemistry with Aga.)

But, it's the refreshing Angelica, who can be seductively playful one moment and tearfully fiery the next, who really comes into her own. She effectively holds her own beside either Aga or Maricel—and we can't wait to see her in more challenging roles!

Sadly, the movie slips because of its characters' tendency to consecutively (and simultaneously) create problems where there shouldn't be any. (And Dante Rivero's Alzheimer's Syndrome-stricken character suffers an implausibly much-too-selective memory lapse—he knows everybody *but* Aga!)

This love story weaves in a good number of Hallmark moments—with a lot of quotable lines, to boot—but they're not strung together as seamlessly as they should be. The film also resorts to mainstream cinema's recent "fad" of using an epilogue so the story can conveniently segue into its requisite happy ending.

Moreover, it dispenses the memorably quotable line, *"Lahat ng tama, masakit sa una."* Yes, we can imagine the provocative line's dramatic possibilities, but we disagree.

SORIANO, MUHLACH AND PANGANIBAN. Unlikely trio pulls off a dramatic feat.

IN THIS ISSUE
Celebs extol joys of 'Travel Time' /F4

SATURDAY *Special*

THE ROAS weathered life's many challenges with love and great resolve.

Pete Roa's *giving, sharing spirit lives on*

By Nestor U. Torre

MY PETE ROA CONNECTION BEGAN when another much-missed friend, Elvira Manahan, asked me to direct her new TV show, "Two for the Road," on ABS-CBN. Pete was the program's executive producer, so we became co-workers, and later friends.

Unique combination

Since Elvira liked having "her boys" close to her, Pete and I quickly became part of "the gang," mostly made up of promising youths like George Sison, Behn Cervantes, Leo Rialp and Edmund Sicam, who were dazzled by the glorious Ms Manahan's unique combination of beauty, gift of gab—and utter unpredictability.

Next, ABS-CBN boss Geny Lopez was impressed with my articles on TV reforms in the Chronicle, which his family also owned, and asked me to address his channel's executives, and it was Pete who helped organize that meeting.

After that, Pete asked me to direct another talk show, to be hosted by another socialite. Trouble was, she was still recovering from a serious accident, and was in no condition to do the show under her own steam.

So, we had to carefully script, rehearse and otherwise structure the show around her, so she would look and sound good on TV. It was a major challenge, but with Pete's help and the ever gracious socialite's luminous screen presence, we pulled it off.

At this point, I considered Pete a friend, but we weren't close. Our friendship deepened when I directed him and his wife Boots in the challenging two-actor comedy, "The Owl and the Pussycat."

It was a demanding production not just because Pete and Boots had to hold center stage all by their lonesome for two whole hours, but also because it was Boots' first time to act against her "sweet" screen image—and play a loud and vulgar prostitute!

Comic touch

It helped a lot that she was alternately screaming at and seducing her own husband, so Boots sank her teeth into the "liberating" role with great relish. And Pete, with his light comic touch, was always there to keep her on track whenever her resolve faltered.

Well, the production was a resounding success, and Boots felt she had proven something important to her audience—that her and Pete's children *hadn't* been conceived *via* Immaculate Conception!

Even later, we directed the pioneering magazine show, "Sanlinggo," on Channel 4, and we got Pete to co-host the show, along with Rosemarie Gil and the late, great Gigi Lacson and Bey Vito. Oh, how well they clicked as co-hosts! As a result, the show became the channel's top rater, and subsequent magazine programs "emulated" some of its features.

Since we rehearsed "Owl" at the Roas' home, we got to know their children well, and saw how close their family was. Years later, after Pete had been partially paralyzed by a stroke, we visited the Roas' home again with Edmund Sicam and saw how both Pete and Boots worked on his physical therapy, which left them both exhausted—and our admiration for them increased.

Clearly, they were a team that would weather life's many challenges with love and great resolve. Indeed, as Pete went from one medical crisis to another, their shared fortitude truly shone through, inspiring everyone around them.

Genuine desire

Pete has gone on to his just reward, but we hold him close to our hearts because of his unique kindness. I'm ending this recollection with two anecdotes to illustrate his genuine desire to help others:

The first is about his concern for young artists. I was asked by the then Film Development Foundation (now Council) of the Philippines to conduct a screenwriting course in Cebu City, and Pete cared about media education so much that he flew down with me to help convince the city's schools and media companies to support the foundation's educational endeavor.

With Pete's help, the four-month course produced some good screenwriters—one of whom even won an award in a national screenwriting competition, competing with many Tagalog writers.

My second anecdote is about jazz queen Annie Brazil: One fine night, Pete asked me to "go slumming" with him, and we ended up in a cheap dive where the only entertainment was being provided by a lady singer, accompanied only by a guitar player.

Glory days

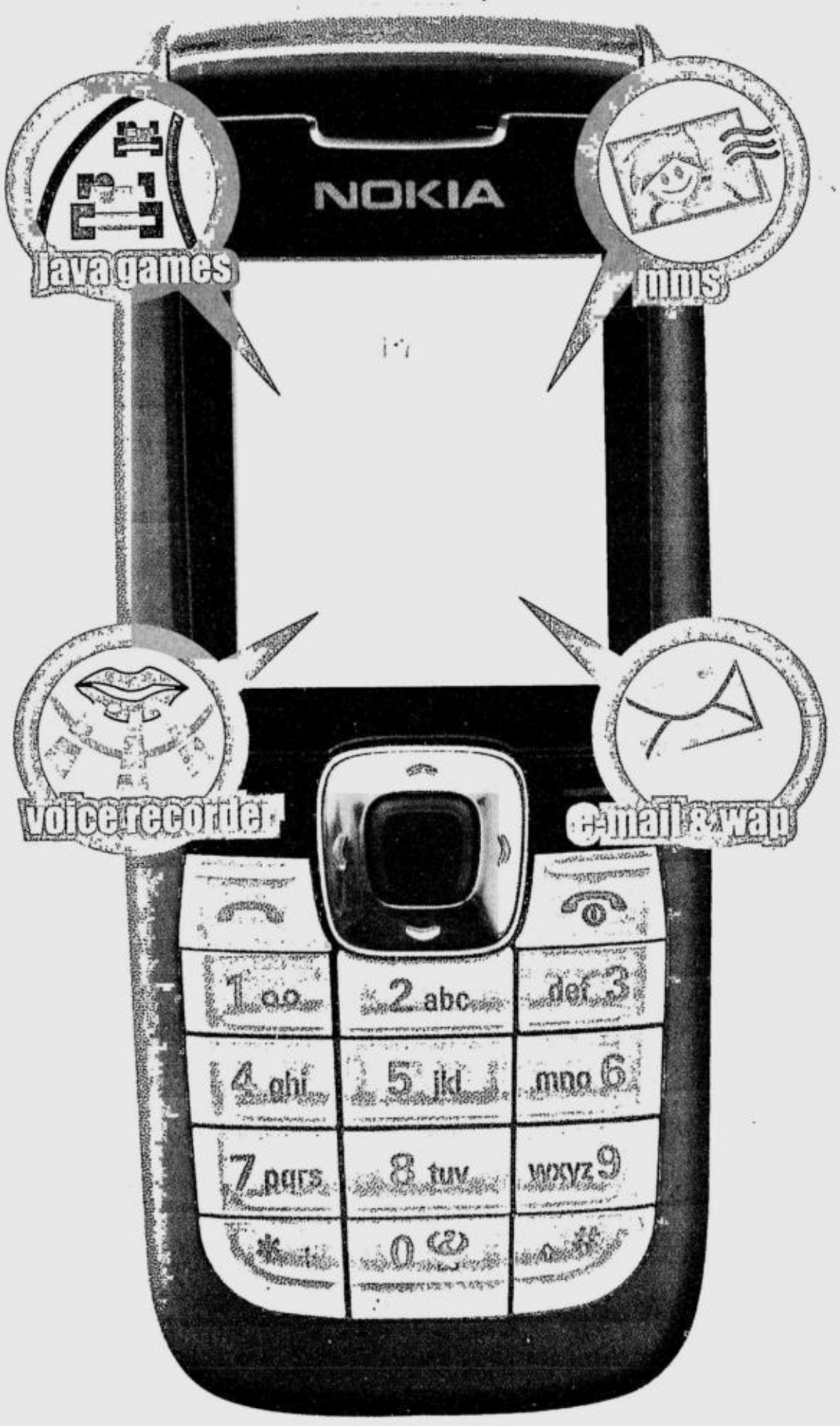
It turned out that the singer was Annie Brazil, whose star had dimmed since her glory days decades ago. We were thunderstruck by her magnificent talent, which was as great as ever—only, her public had forgotten her.

Pete and I then embarked on a campaign to write articles to remind everyone that we had a brilliant musical talent languishing unrecognized in our clueless midst.

Well, our little campaign worked: The next time Pete and I checked, Annie was already drawing crowds at a five-star hotel, and we felt psychically fulfilled, because a great talent had once more gotten the recognition she most clearly deserved.

The point is that, without Pete, it's likely that none of that would have happened. And that's only the icing on the already yummy cake of Pete Roa's lifelong and instinctive penchant for helping others with absolutely no fanfare—and without expecting anything in return.

Pete may no longer be with us on this mortal plane, but the inspiring example of his good deeds lives on!



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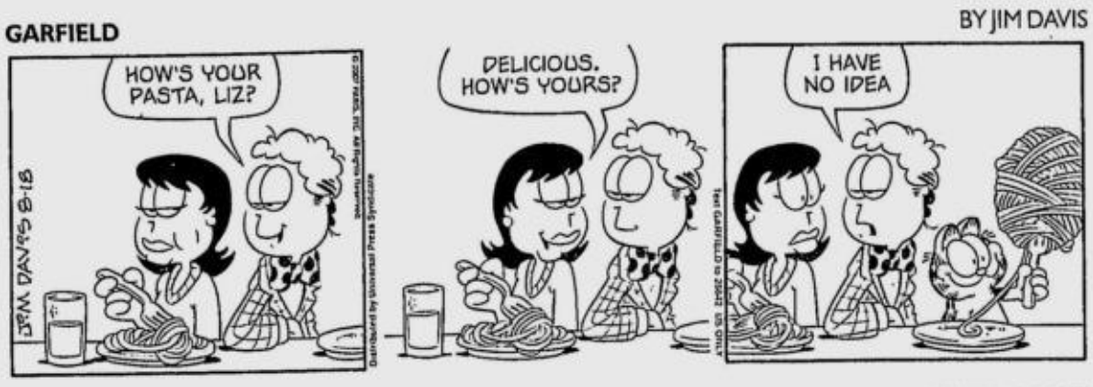

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BY PATRICK McDONNELL

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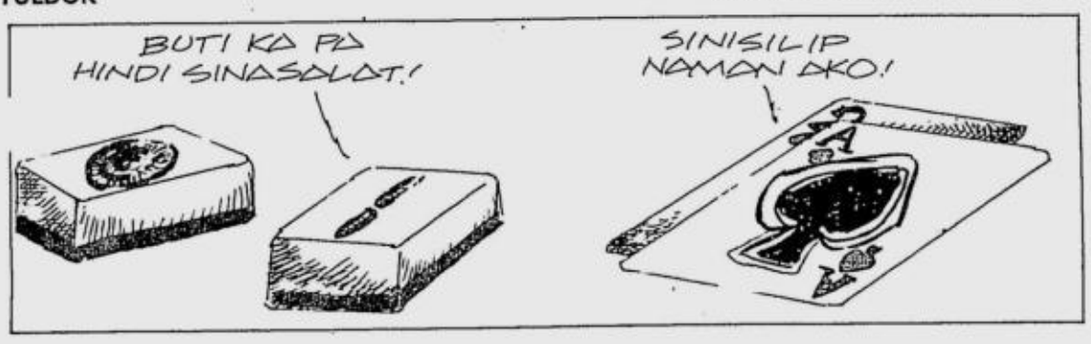
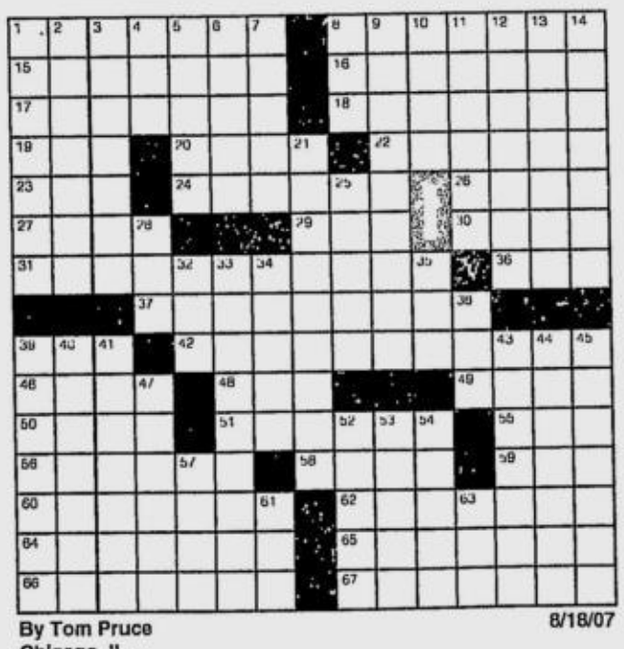


BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Venezuelan currency
8 Strives
15 Cupidity
16 Presley movie
17 Stretching muscles
18 Saving imperiled property
19 Make an attempt
20 Okay, why not?
22 Wine choice
23 Slice of history
24 Take as true without proof
26 Pockmark
27 Seniors' org.
29 __ Alamos, NM
30 Smallest Great Lake, by volume
31 In a bad light
36 Downcast
37 Exhibition rooms
39 Damage to a degree
42 David Attenborough series
46 Fifths of a five?
48 Mine product
49 Infamous fiddler
50 Verne captain
51 Hindu divisions
55 Used chairs
56 Mrs. Ferdinand Marcos
58 Poi source
59 Mining excavation
60 Heart-shaped
62 Rope of two twisted strands
64 Enraged
65 Landed properties
66 Lady with vision
67 Profiterole or pie

DOWN
1 French boat
2 Went past
3 Cord for a whistle
4 April 15 org.
5 One of the strings
6 Parcels of land
7 Breathers
8 Beast of burden
9 Astronaut's outfit
10 Medicinal tablet
11 Cross the border
12 Lions, at times
13 Aromatic tropical shrub
14 Marked text to keep
21 Most morose
25 Demi of Hollywood
28 Cribbage scorekeeper
32 Eminem specialty
33 Assigns a place
34 Bow of films
35 Actress Ruby
38 Japanese title of respect
39 Seles and Dickens
40 Plant with cup-shaped flowers
41 Get back into single file
43 Break
44 Fitness coach
45 Most trendy
47 Join with a molten alloy
52 Domesticated
53 Clear the slate
54 Kinds
57 Act boldly
61 Newspaper honchos
63 __ Vegas



By Tom Pruce
Chicago, IL
8/18/07

Friday's Puzzle Solved

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A	U	R	A	S		S	H	A	R	E	W	A	R	E
S	P	E	C	T	A	T	O	R	S	P	O	R	T	S
H	I	C	K	O	R	I	E	S		T	R	O	U	T
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8/18/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're wise and emotionally deep. If you want to be, you're a natural leader. You're a great adviser and helpmate to others. You want to experience life firsthand. You don't complain, because you understand that life is never easy. You can be fun-loving, but essentially you're quite a serious realist. The year ahead might be one of the best years of your life!
Birthdate of: Robert Redford, actor; Rosalynn Carter, former first lady/humanitarian; Madeleine Stowe, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Be realistic about your expectations of children and young people today. And don't be a harsh judge of your own creative talents. You're better than you think. (And so are others.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Discussions with older people, family members or parents are quite serious but productive today. You're taking a long-range view of things.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): It's easy to fall into pessimistic or critical thinking today. Try not to do this. Instead, use your powers of concentration to get work done!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might be a bit discouraged about your financial situation. However, you're thinking hard about a successful plan for your future. Good!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): This is a good time to start a writing project or begin anything that requires your communication skills. You're very serious about achieving something now.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Continue to do research into something that you're interested in. You'll find the answers you're seeking. You have wonderful powers of concentration today.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Someone older might have a place for you today. Alternatively, you might be the older person dispensing advice. Everyone is in a practical frame of mind today.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with bosses, parents and VIPs are quite serious. Don't push your luck. Pull in your reins a little. Act like you know what you're doing, even if you don't.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Travel plans and anything connected with publishing, the media, medicine and the law are very solid today. You won't overlook details. Your mind is very focused.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Discussions about shared property can go well today. You're serious about long-range results. You're also very realistic and slightly conservative. Trust your judgment.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Resist the urge to be critical of friends and partners today. You have high ambitions for yourself, and you want everyone else to jump onboard. Hey, they might not be ready to do it.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Your powers of concentration are excellent today. This is a good day to tackle work that requires perseverance and attention to detail. You're certainly willing to work long, hard hours so that you can finish the job.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

5								1
		6				3		
	3		2		5		9	
		4		2		6		
			6		3			
		8		4		1		
	2		1		9		4	
		9				7		
7								5

Difficulty Level ★★★★
8/18

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	6	1	2	3	9	7	5	8
9	8	3	5	6	7	2	4	1
7	2	5	4	1	8	9	6	3
3	9	6	8	5	2	1	7	4
1	4	8	9	7	6	3	2	5
2	5	7	3	4	1	8	9	6
6	1	9	7	8	5	4	3	2
8	3	2	6	9	4	5	1	7
5	7	4	1	2	3	6	8	9

Difficulty Level ★★★★

PBO screens 'Kaleldo'

MONTAGE

CELEBRATE PINOY BOX OFFICE'S FOURTH year with a bundle of viewing treats, this month:

Last Aug. 10 on PBO Premiere, the Viva Hot Babes led off with their titillating special. And on Aug. 24 at 9:30 p.m., Brillante Mendoza's "Kaleldo" unreels its acclaimed tale about a dysfunctional family, starring Johnny Delgado, Julianna Palermo, Angel Aquino and Cherry Pie Picache.

In addition, PBO Pambansang Premiere kicks off this month in Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga with the free movie premiere of "1408" for subscribers of the cable channel's partners. Backed by a powerhouse cast led by John Cusack and Samuel L. Jackson, "1408" has scored the biggest US opening ever of a Stephen King adaptation.

PBO can be seen on over 300 cable systems nationwide, and in 32 countries in the Middle East. For its programming schedule, visit www.viva.com.ph.

Big sale at Mano-Mano

Lovers of fine Philippine handicraft products should take advantage of the big sale (up to 50 percent off) at the Mano-Mano Fair Trade store at 2594 Lamayan st. in Sta. Ana (tel. no. 564-4169), up to Aug. 30.

Mano-Mano showcases the best handicrafts from all over the Philippines, beautiful products perfect for home or office decor, or as gifts to friends and loved ones.

Being a Fair Trade store, Mano-Mano treats its workers and suppliers with dignity and concern, serving as an example for other stores to emulate. So, shopping at Mano-Mano is doubly rewarding: You get to own beautiful handicrafts, while supporting a laudable cause.

Penshoppe's campus tour

"Penshoppe Higher Learning: The Bamboo Campus Tour" unreeled last July 17 at the University of San Carlos in Cebu. A highlight is Penshoppe's unique Learning Hub, where students are given the chance to speak their minds.

Other modules are Penshoppe Style 101 with Cherrie Pacheco-Uy, Makeup and Beauty with Michelle Lim, How to Mix and Spin with DJ Mike Cons, and the Runway Romp workshop with Club Pen's Matteo Guidicelli and Dawn Balagot.

Capping the tour is a powerhouse performance by the popular Bamboo band. The concert tour will next rock Davao on Aug. 24 and Manila on Sept. 25. Visit www.penshoppe.com.

Calabarzon film festival

De La Salle Lipa will showcase short films from schools around Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon on Aug. 23 and 24. Milo Tolentino's "Dilim" will be the opening film. A filmmaking congress will be graced by award-winning writer-director Rica Arevalo and editor Anna Isabelle Matutina.

'Firefly'

Every Monday at 8 p.m. beginning Aug. 20, the C/S Channel telecasts "Firefly," a sci-fi series about a transport spaceship that takes on any job in the universe.

'Entourage'

Today and tomorrow, "Entourage" on Skycable Platinum (HBO Pak) screens a marathon airing of 10 episodes per day of the Emmy Award-winning HBO production. Call Skycable at 631-0000.

'Don't Look Back'

The premiere of the hit horror film, "Don't Look Back," will be held at 6 p.m. today at Robinsons Movieworld-Galleria. To introduce this Asian blockbuster to the Philippines, its star, Pierre Andre, director Ahmad Idham and producer David Teo will grace the premiere and go on a media promo tour.

Movies on TV

On HBO today at 11 p.m., "Girl, Interrupted." Tomorrow At 7 p.m., "Tim Burton's The Corpse Bride." Aug. 20 at 9 p.m., "Dance with Me." Aug. 21 at 3:45 p.m., "Sweet Liberty." Aug. 22 at 5:15 p.m., "Broken Flowers." Aug. 23 at 11 p.m., "Chances Are." Aug. 24 at 9 p.m., "Monster-in-Law."

CUSACK. Topbills "1408" with Samuel L. Jackson.

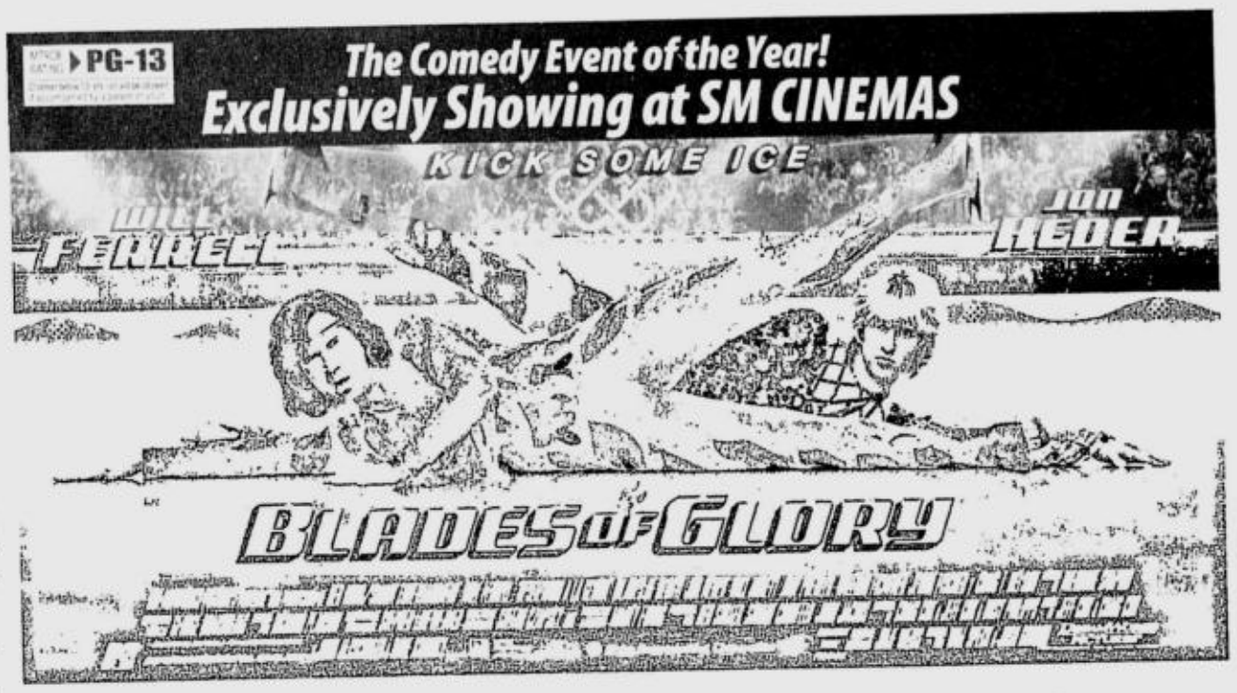
SURF'S UP ACTIVITIES

AUGUST 18 (3:00PM) – "SURF'S UP" Mall Show
*Dance Number
*Meet & Greet / Photo Op with Cody
*Surfing Clinic by Stonemoney
*Games and Raffle
Robinsons Metro East Mall Activity Area

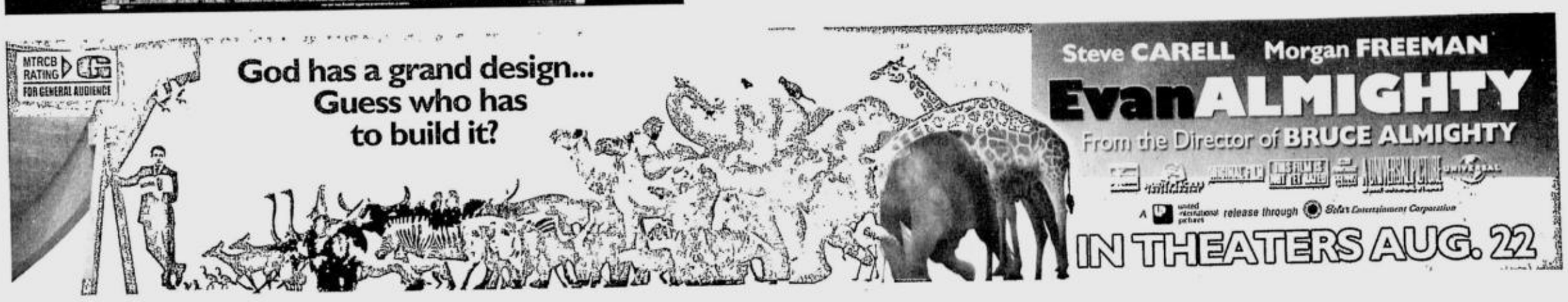
AUGUST 19 (3:00 – 6:00PM) – "Surf's Up" Meet & Greet Cody
Robinsons Pioneer Cinema Lobby

AUGUST 26 (11:00AM) – "SURF'S UP" Mall Show
*Dance Number
*Meet & Greet / Photo-Op with Cody
*Surfing Clinic by Stonemoney
*Games and Raffle
Robinsons Bacolod Mall Activity Area

NOW SHOWING AT ALL ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD



MTRCB RATING ▶ G GENERAL AUDIENCE | ALL AGES ADMITTED
OPENS AUG. 22
$108,679,524
TOTAL BOX-OFFICE GROSS AS OF 08/13/2007
THE BIGGEST U.S. OPENING ON RECORD FOR A MUSICAL



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Where to Stop Where to GO

A weekly directory of the country's best establishments

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www.bestwesternastor.com

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Tel 687-1111 Fax 910-0370
sales@astoriaplaza.com

CSB Hotel
Arellano Ave., cor. Estrada St., Malate, Manila Tel. 400-3333
Fax 400-7401
customerservice@csbhotel.com

Executive Plaza Hotel
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Tel 523-1000 /fax 525-8979
sales@executiveplazahotel.com
www.executiveplazahotel.com

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Tel. (074) 446-0700 to 03
Fax (074) 446-0704
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www.hotelveniz.com

Intercontinental Manila
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Tel. 815-9711
www.intercontinental.com

Garden Plaza Hotel & Suites
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Tel. 522-4835
Fax 522-4840

Las Palmas Hotel Manila
1616 A. Mabini St., Malate, Manila
Tel. 521-1000/ Fax 523-6917
www.laspalmashotel.com.ph

Mactan Island Resort
Punta Engano Road, Lapu Lapu Cebu
Tel. 231-0288/Fax 231-1688
www.shangri-la.com

The Peninsula Manila
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www.the-ascott.com

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www.waterfronthotels.net

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www.asbgroup.com.ph

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Garden Heights
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Telefax 528-1811
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Fax. (072) 242-5631
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Taal Vista Hotel
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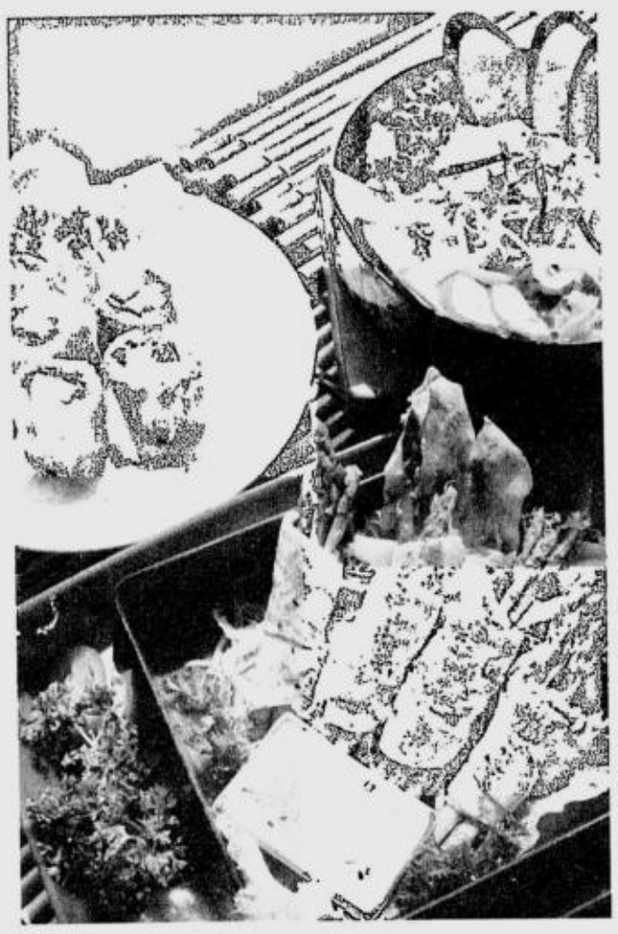
Tel. 886-4325, (6346) 413-1000
taalvista@fuegohotels.com

Go fresh and healthy with Sulo's Japanese Salad Bar

GIVING YOU MORE REASONS to have tummy filling yet guilt-free dinner eats, The Sulo Hotel now offers salad varieties buffet style available at the Sushi Bar for the whole month of August.

Some of the favored dishes are Bacon No Asaparagus, Kanibo Salad and Haposai Maki. Bacon No Asparagus is a rendition of the favorite asparagus slices wrapped with bacon, while Kanibo Salad is a version of the creamy mixture of shredded cucumber and crabsticks. Also try Haposai Maki with Gomatari Sauce, which is a roll of fresh romaine lettuce, spinach, asparagus and carrots that is best dipped with tasty mixture of ground sesame seeds and special spices.

More varieties are in store for only P198++ per head. Served during dinner from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Sushi Bar. For inquiries and reservations, please contact 924-5051 or visit the website at www.sulohotel.com.ph. The Sulo Hotel is located at Matalino Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

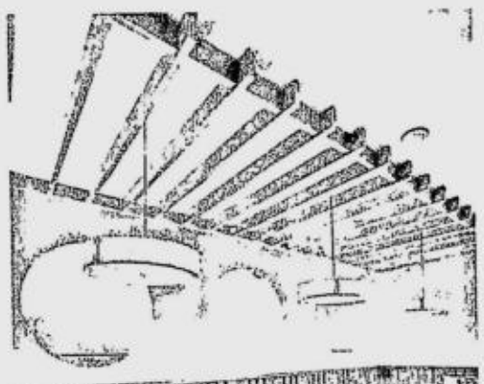


SULO side bar

Traditional tastes for the modern palates

FROM THE MODISH CITYSCAPE OF Manila springs forth a sanctuary that defies time and change. This dining sanctuary is known for serving rich traditional oriental cuisine in a contemporary scene and it is called Peony Garden.

Tradition and modernity blend in perfect harmony at the Peony Garden for this dining oasis presents the long heritage of Cantonese cooking in a modern fashion hence, offering its guests a gastronomic experience singularly like no other.



Original Cantonese dishes fired-up with a hint of Malaysian tang - a distinct combination of flavors that is once again exceptionally Peony Garden. And at the helm of this distinguishing creation is Chinese-Malaysian chef Lee Yang Feng who personally pieced the menu and saw to the originality of the dishes prepared. According to chef Lee, freshness and all natural ingredients are the two essential elements of his recipes. And true to this practice, Peony Garden displays by its entrance a large aquarium of different kinds of live seafood: blue dotted, king, lapu-lapu, mameng, panther, crabs, lobster and eels. From this tank, customers can request their choice of seafood for immediate preparation.

And for exclusive celebrations, Peony Garden reserves three private spaces that can accommodate guests in a single large group: Sunflower, Lotus and Peach. Sunflower is the biggest, with a seating capacity of 16 persons, followed by Lotus with 12 and Peach with 10. But with the Sunflower and Peach rooms being adjacent to each other, they may be adjoined to make way for bigger groups.

The Peony Garden is open daily during lunch from 11:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and dinner from 6:30 to 10:30 p.m. For inquiries, please call Manila Pavilion Hotel at 526-1212 extension 2303.

Manila Pavilion Hotel is a part of Waterfront Philippines Inc, the largest Filipino hotel chain in the country. It is located at United Nations Avenue corner Maria Orosa Street, Manila.

'Pink Icon' jeepney created in luxury

ANOTHER FIRST FROM THE FEARless innovator and Hilton Cebu Resort and Spa's chair, Manny Osmeña, the "Pink Icon", which will serve as the airport shuttle for the 5-star Hilton Cebu Resort and Spa, will surely add excitement to the Hilton Cebu experience.

When the Hilton Cebu Resort and Spa opened, Manny didn't like the idea of just having another shuttle bus for the resort, he wanted to offer something different and exciting - a talking point.

"What is better than taking the jeepney - a Philippine icon and make it a luxurious product and to make it look expensive too." He then started communicating his ideas and vision to Rod, Hilton Cebu Resort and Spa in-house graphic artist and Ali, project architect who knows and understands well Manny's design concept and direction. Using art-nouveau strokes as the overall design for the body of the vehicle, in different tone of flamingo pink and glitzy chrome as the color scheme, while taking some of the design elements from old vintage cars i.e. the Rolls Royce and Bentley, - the pronounced and rounded fenders, pop-out headlights, round hub-caps and tall vertical front grilles and the suspended logo.

"After the concept and design, I didn't realize that the bigger challenge was to find someone to build it. I first approached the 2 big jeepney builders, but they were not prepared for the challenge of my high expectations. It took me months to finally find a small jeepney builder in Valenzuela who was willing to build it, while I didn't hesitate to tell them that it won't be easy to satisfy the level of quality that I will be expecting, but, Obet, the cousin of the owner who is the craftsman/foreman of the shop decided to take the challenge.

"I must have personally inspected it almost 20 times during the making, a few times with Ali and Rod. It was very difficult for all of us, the fender was changed 4 times. The hub-caps 3 times and the art nouveau design of the paint was redone several times too. I had to send the best upholsterer from Cebu to do the seats and the interiors, the audio system was also replaced twice."

"My ultimate challenge, would be to sell the idea to Flamingo Hilton in Las Vegas to use this "Pink Icon" as their airport shuttle, God willing, when that happens our Philippine icon will be on the roads of a city with the most populous tourist in the world."

All the details of this "Pink Icon" are now being copyrighted.

The Pink Icon starts its luxurious drive in Manila this month for showcase, and then it will go home to Cebu, where the ride will carry on.

Ascott international holds a blood drive in Manila

ASCOTT INTERNATIONAL IN ITS continuous efforts to provide service within and beyond the walls of its four properties in Makati City held a blood drive in partnership with the Philippine National Red Cross. Management and employees of Ascott Makati, Somerset Millennium Makati, Somerset Olympia Makati and Somerset Salcedo Makati volunteered and donated blood as one of its community social responsibility initiatives this year. The blood donation drive was conducted in latest property addition, Ascott Makati (rebranded in March 2007).

The Ascott Group is the largest international serviced residence owner-operator outside the United States with over 19,500 serviced residence units in key cities of Asia Pacific, Europe and the Gulf region. This includes over 5,500 units which are under development.

The Group operates three brands - Ascott, Somerset and Citadines. Its portfolio spans over 50 cities in 22 countries, 11 of which are new cities where Ascott's serviced residences are being developed. Ascott's properties can be found in cities including London, Paris, Brussels, Berlin and Barcelona in Europe; Singapore, Bangkok, Hanoi, Kuala Lumpur, Tokyo, Seoul, Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong in Asia; Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland in Australia / New Zealand, as well as Dubai in the Gulf region. For more information, log on to www.the-ascott.com.

Conway's
Conway's Bar
813 8888 ext. 7026

Mey Lin
Mey Lin Pot & Noodle House
899 6688 / 899 8999

TONY ROMA'S
Tony Roma's Restaurants
757 1926 / 771 1388

Island
Island Foot & Body Wellness
899 1234 / 751 8296

Cafe Mediterranean
Greenbelt
894-4032

Bo's Coffee Club

The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf

CAUSEWAY
Causeway Seafood Restaurant
24 Timog Ave, Q.C.
376-2559

Clawdaddy
Crabhouse and American Grill
636-5679

Heaven 'n Eggs
(02) 818-2792
(02) 889-3791

KALYEJUAN
Kalyejuan
0920-94-kalye

Sushi-Ya
0917-84-sushi

TONG YANG
Tong Yang Shabu-Shabu & BBQ Restaurant
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Palaisdaan Restaurant
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FJ's Grill
24 Timog Ave, Q.C.
376-2559

The Old Spaghetti House
687-6630

NORTH PARK
North Park
73737

MUSEUM CAFÉ
Ayala Museum, Greenbelt 4
757-3000
757-6000

Chelsea
Chelsea Market & Cafe
909-7011
909-7012